

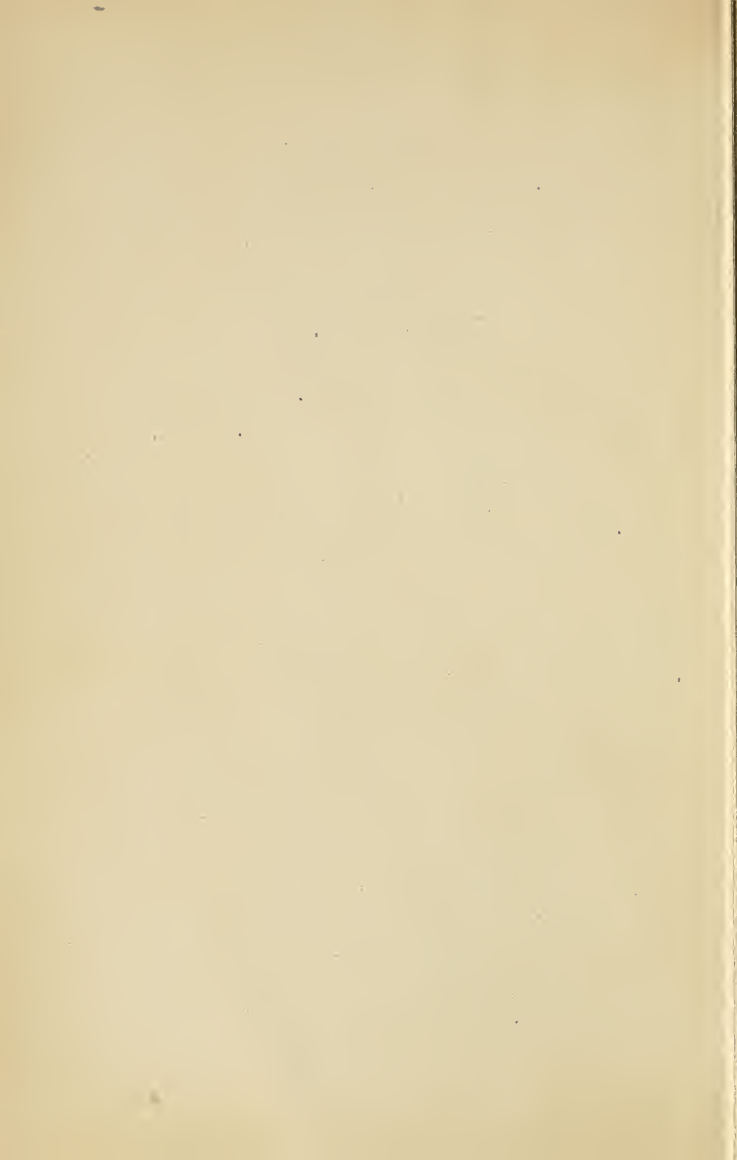


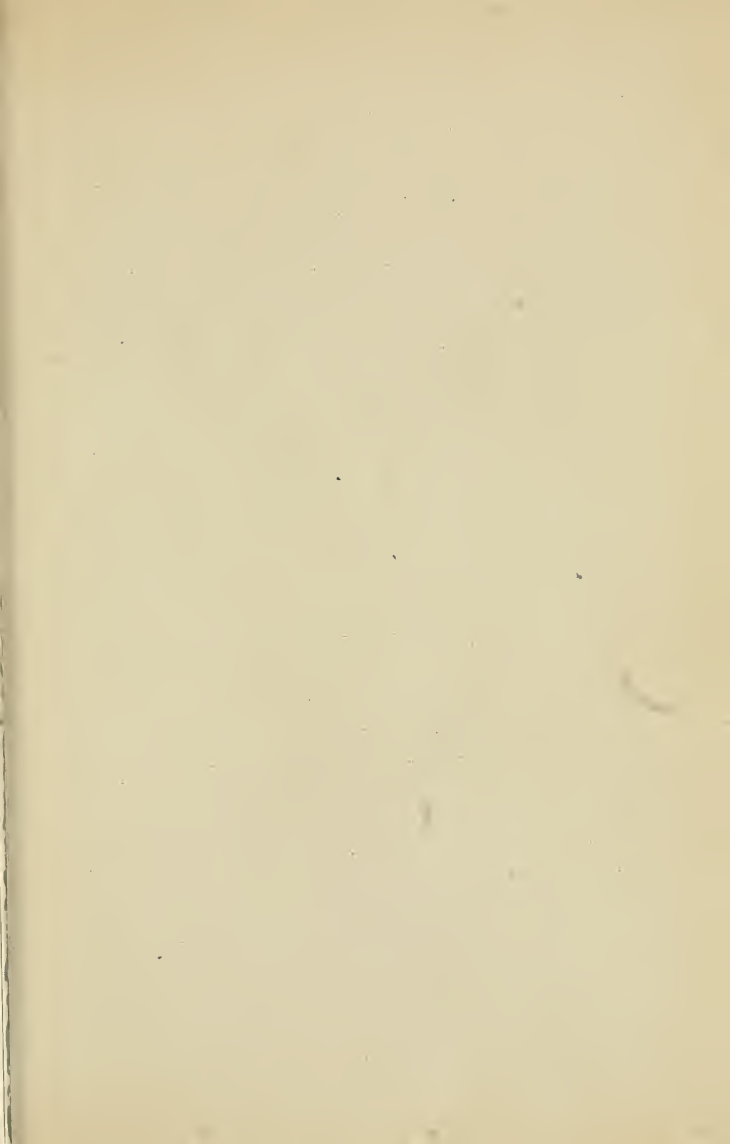
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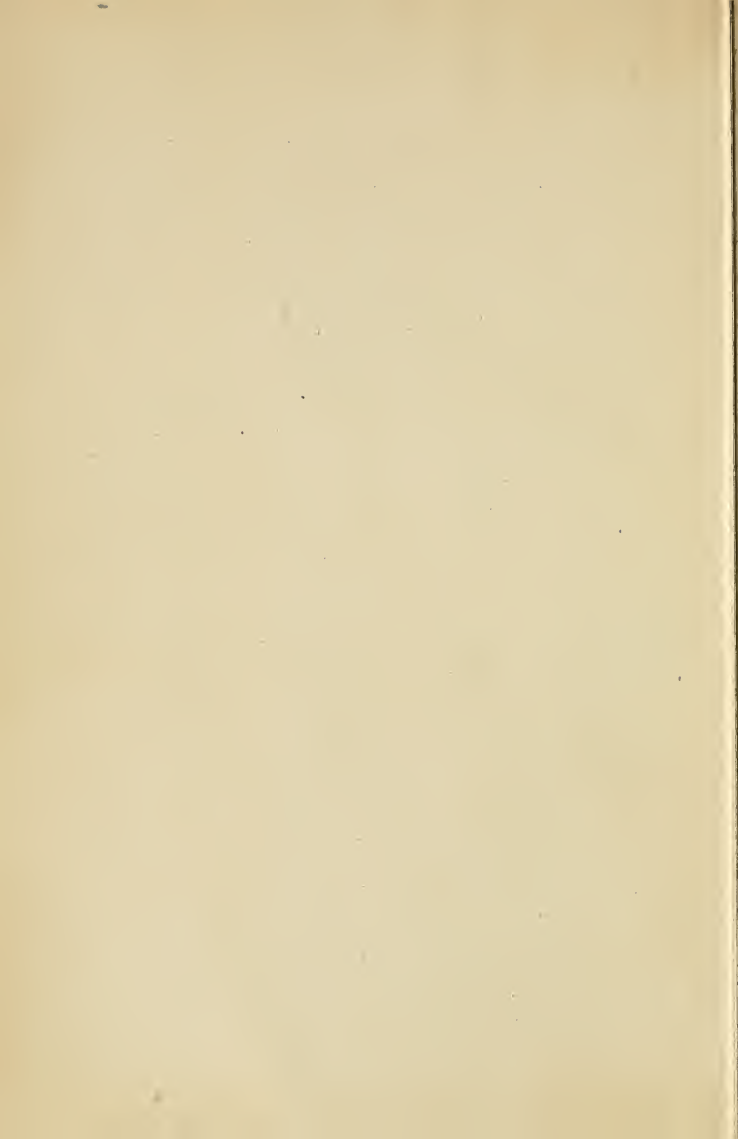
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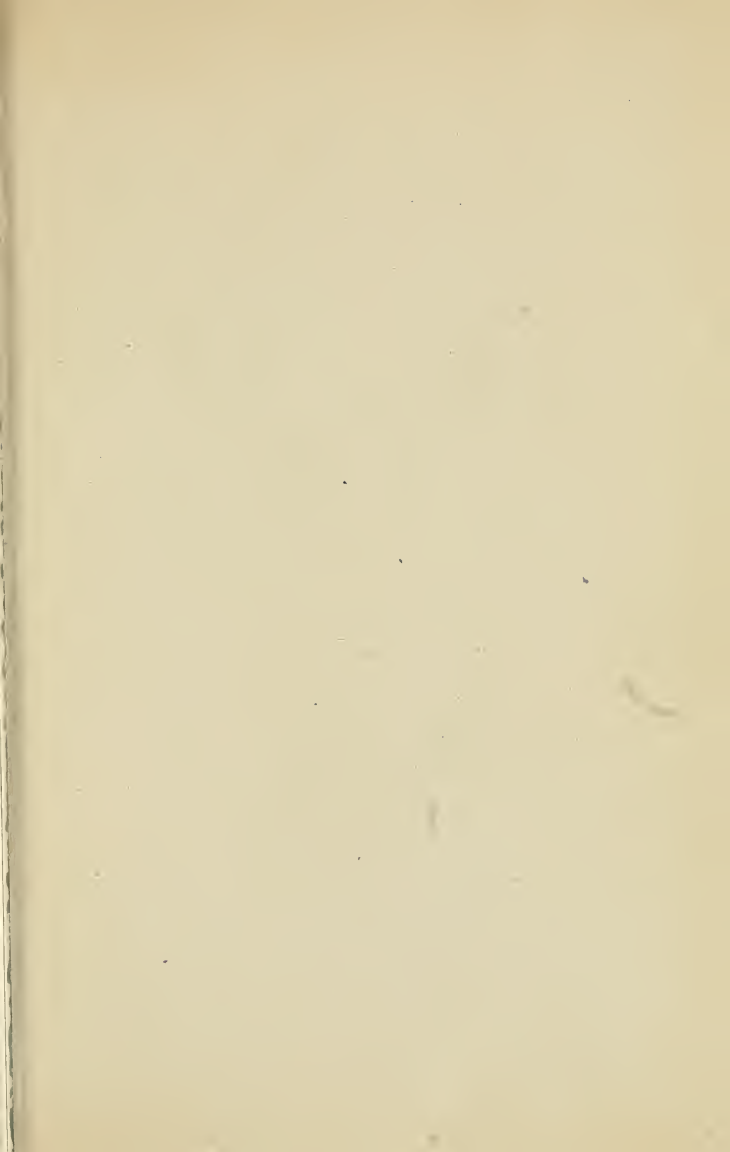
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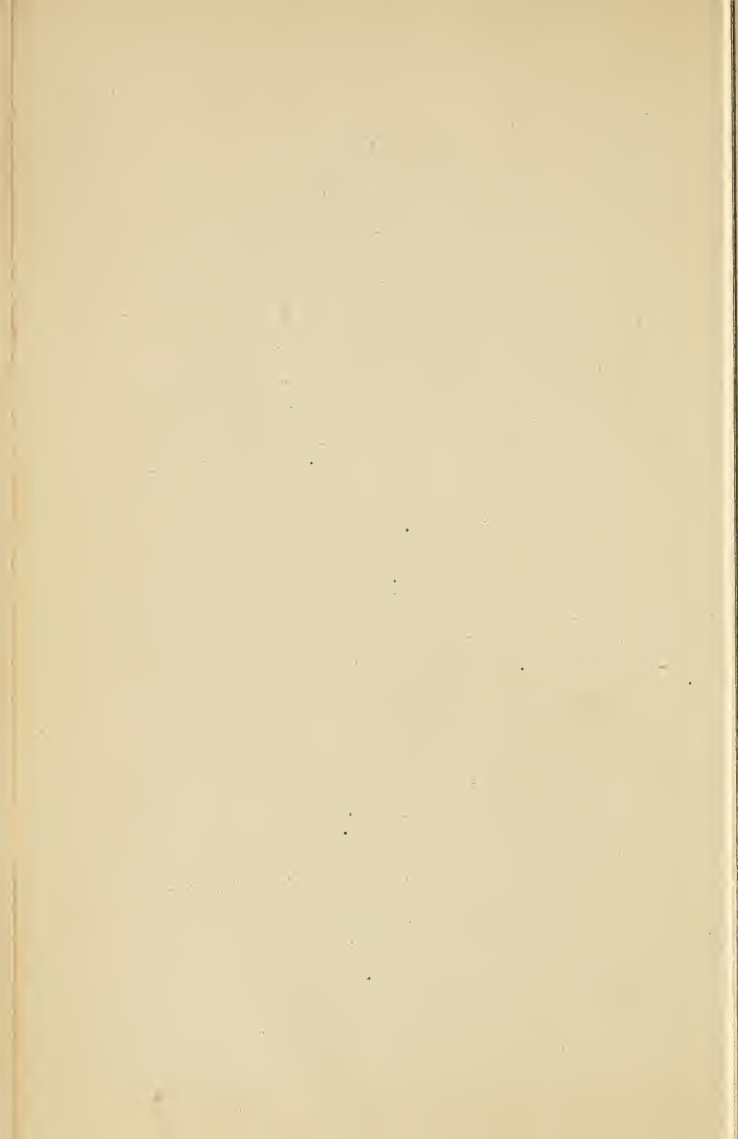


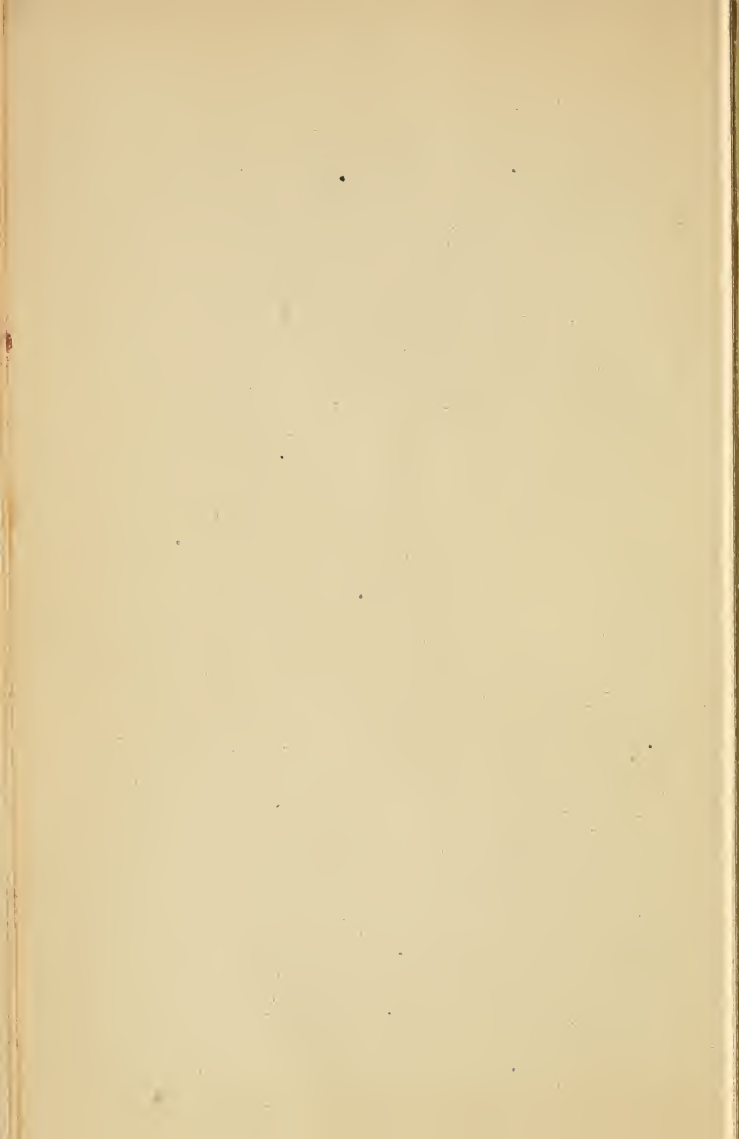














Washington drawing his sword at Cambridge as Commander in Chief.



BOSTON
CROSBY, NICHOLS, & Co.
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L I F E
OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON.

WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN.

BY
E. CECIL.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,
117 WASHINGTON STREET.
1859.



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THIS little book has been written with the hope of giving American children some knowledge of Washington's character.

Great pains have been taken to make it accurate, and to avoid the use of long words ; but it is not possible to render all the complications and responsibilities of Washington's public career perfectly plain to children.

Enough, however, is accomplished, if they can enter into the spirit of his life, and gain something of that loyalty to his memory which every American should feel.



GEORGE WASHINGTON.

GEORGE WASHINGTON was born the 22d of February, 1732, in a house which had belonged to his great-grandfather, on Bridge's Creek, near the Potomac River, in Westmoreland County, Virginia. His father's name was Augustine Washington; his mother's, before her marriage, Mary Ball. She was the second wife of Mr. Washington, and a beautiful woman. She seems also to have had a strong, upright character; and brought up her children exceedingly well.

Soon after George's birth, his father left the old family estate, and went to live in Stafford County, near Fredericksburg. Both these houses have since gone to ruin.

In those days, good schools were very rare, and even the rich planters did not find it easy to have

their children well educated. A man named Hobby kept the school to which George Washington was first sent, and taught him to read and write, and perhaps to cipher; but Mr. Washington also gave him lessons at home, and seems to have been a wise, good father.

When George was about seven years old, his half-brother Laurence * came home from England, where he had been educated. He was about twenty-two years old; had served in the British army, and talked much about war. George's head was soon full of fighting. He used to arrange his school-mates in companies, and have parades, reviews, and battles. He was often the captain; but the boys showed still more respect for him, by making him the judge in their disputes.

In 1743, when George was eleven years old, his father died; and he was sent away from his mother to live with his elder brother Augustine,† in order to go to school. His education was very simple: no one expected him to be a great scholar. Some very neat books in his handwriting have been kept. They contain first lessons in geometry, and copies of

* The eldest son of Augustine Washington's first wife.

† The second son.

all sorts of forms of business papers, such as merchants and lawyers use in conveying land, goods, or other things. Then come some extracts in verse. One book has some queer birds drawn with a pen, and profiles of faces, perhaps meant for likenesses of the school-boys.

He was very fond of active sports; he used to run, to leap, to wrestle, to toss bars, and to pitch quoits.* He could mount and manage any horse, however fiery. He was very tall, and all this exercise made him strong.

About this time he wrote out "A Hundred and Ten Rules for Behavior in Company and Conversation." As Washington's manners were remarkably composed and dignified when he became a man, let us look at some of these rules which he obeyed of his own accord while he was yet a school-boy. One is, "When a man does all he can, though it succeeds not, blame not him that did it." Another is, "Play not the peacock, looking everywhere about you to see if you be well-decked, if your shoes fit, if your stockings set neatly and clothes handsomely." And another, "Think before you speak; pronounce

* Iron rings, or plates, which are thrown at a mark.

not imperfectly, nor bring out your words too hastily, but orderly and distinctly." — "Be not curious to know the affairs of others." — "Speak not evil of the absent ; for it is unjust." — "Make no show of taking great delight in your victuals ; feed not with greediness ; lean not on the table ; neither find fault with what you eat." — "Be not angry at table, whatever happens ; and, if you have reason to be so, show it not. Put on a cheerful countenance, especially if there be strangers ; for good-humor makes one dish of meat a feast." — "Let your recreations be manful, not sinful."

These specimens show that George Washington had resolved to avoid doing whatever is unpleasant to others. To think much of other people, and little of ourselves, is the surest indication of good manners. From the example of his brother Laurence, and from the company of the Fairfax family, — neighbors whom he saw often, — he could form a good idea of the behavior of a gentleman.

When he was fourteen years old, he had a great desire to go to sea. Ships of war sometimes anchored in the Potomac River. The officers probably visited Laurence Washington at his estate of Mount Vernon ; and George, no doubt, listened

eagerly to their stories of battles, sieges, and storms. All his friends approved of the plan, except his mother, who at last gave an unwilling consent; and it is said that his luggage had been put on board a ship lying just below Mount Vernon, when Mrs. Washington's heart failed her, and she said she could not part in that way with her eldest boy. He was so thoughtful and manly, that his mother must have depended upon him very much; though he usually lived at a little distance from her, with one or other of his elder brothers. He was particularly fond of Laurence.

At school he now studied surveying* with great care, and such mathematics as might be useful either in time of war or in time of peace. Every survey is put down in a book with as much care as if the land were his own estate. He never in his life left things half done. Even as a boy, he was thorough. "He had acquired the magic of method, which of itself works wonders."

But in these books, mixed up with business writings, are found some very sentimental verses about

* Measuring land carefully by means of instruments. The measures are then put down on a map, with woods, rivers, houses, roads, &c. also marked.

a young lady. Washington calls her a "lowland beauty," and says he was very unhappy, and that he never dared to tell her his admiration. It was rather the fashion in those days for gentlemen to address to ladies what we now think very poor poetry; but they seldom began at the age of fifteen. However, rhyming must have been put completely out of his head by the active life he led soon after this time.

In the winter of 1747, Washington was making a visit at Belvoir, the home of his friends the Fairfaxes, when he first met Lord Fairfax, the owner of a large tract of land lying between the Rappahannock and Shenandoah Rivers. The old lord was a great fox-hunter, and, being pleased with Washington's bold riding, taught him the "noble art" of hunting. They became well acquainted, and Lord Fairfax saw that he was a hardy, active young man, of good judgment, and proposed to him to survey and examine his large estate. The land was beautiful and fertile, but had been seized upon by squatters.* It was now to be divided. The work would no doubt be hard; but Washington was well pre-

* People who build houses or huts, and live on land which they never purchased.

pared for it; and in March, 1748, he set out upon his first journey into the wilderness, in company with George William Fairfax,* of the Belvoir family.

It was not much like a journey now-a-days. They rode on horseback. The few houses they stopped at were dirty and uncomfortable. For instance, in Washington's Diary, he writes, "Travelled up to Solomon Hedge's, Esq., one of his majesty's justices of the peace, where we encamped. When we came to supper, there was neither a knife on the table nor a fork to eat with; but, as good luck would have it, we had knives of our own." He seems to have enjoyed the nights spent in the woods much more than those passed in untidy houses.

In the same journal, Washington speaks of the beautiful sugar-maples on the banks of the Shenandoah, of the different kinds of soil, and of the value of the land for building. Lord Fairfax had chosen well: George Washington was a careful, faithful surveyor.

During this trip, he saw the Indians in their homes for the first time. Some of them danced a war-dance one night, savagely indeed. The life he led for several weeks was rough; but he was well

* Lord Fairfax was a distant relation of Mr. Fairfax of Belvoir.

fitted to enjoy its pleasures, and to make light of a wetting or a long ride. His work, and his account of the country, pleased Lord Fairfax so much, that he crossed the Blue Ridge, and built a house called Greenway Court. It was a solitary dwelling, and open to all travellers, Indian or white. Here Washington was always a welcome guest, and had many a fox-hunt with the singular old nobleman. Lord Fairfax knew much of men and books, and had seen a great deal of life that was not dreamt of in the woods of Virginia.

At Greenway Court, Washington read the "History of England" and the "Spectator," a much-admired English paper. After his surveying expedition for Lord Fairfax, he was appointed, probably through his Lordship's influence, public surveyor. He continued in this occupation for three years; and his surveys are so correct, that to this day they are used. Think of that! In all these hundred and seven years, nobody has been found to do the work better than that young man of eighteen or nineteen years! Washington always *did his best*: this is the secret of his success in life. When he was young, he thought nothing which he had once undertaken too small to be worth doing faithfully.

In 1751, Laurence Washington became very ill, and George went with him to Barbadoes. He was a kind brother, and the affection between them was strong and warm. He had exercised a very important influence over Washington at an age when a boy is easily guided by a brother so much older; and, all through his illness, he seems to have relied entirely on George's strong character. At his death, in 1752, he gave another proof of confidence in him by leaving in his hands the management of large estates,* though such cares are not usually intrusted to men only twenty years old.

In 1751, Washington was appointed a major in the service of Virginia. The country was divided into districts, and it was the duty of every major to drill the militia of one district. Laurence Washington probably obtained the appointment for his brother George, who immediately began to study military matters with great zeal.

War was now expected between the English and French. Each nation claimed the rich lands bordering on the Ohio River and the Valley of the Missis-

* At the death of Laurence Washington's child, Washington, by his brother's will, became the owner of his beautiful estate of Mount Vernon.

issippi; and each tried to secure the friendship of the Indians,* who were to be driven from their hunting-grounds at any cost.

At this time there were no United States. The settled part of the country was divided into Colonies. People called England "home." If there were any fighting, the Colonies would send out their troops against the French, either with the regular British army, or under "Provincial officers,"† as they were called.

The military spirit was strong in Virginia. The Ohio River was carefully watched; and, in 1753, the governor decided to send a special messenger to the nearest French officer, to find out what his intentions were, and, on the way, to visit various Indian chiefs, and keep them in friendly humor. It was by no means an easy service; yet the governor intrusted it to young Major Washington.

Indians are childish; always tempted by presents,

* Sachem Gachradodow said to the commissioner of Virginia: "The great king might send you over to conquer the Indians, but it looks to us that God did not approve it: if he had, he would not have placed the great sea where it is, as the limit between us and you."

† A Colony was often called a Province; as the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

which the French gave them freely. They made many promises to Washington; but he knew well that he could not depend upon them. They are very slow, too, in making any agreement; and delayed Washington day after day. But he was patient; and, at last, three chiefs went with him to the French fort.

The journey was toilsome, "through snow and rain, mire and swamp." Fifty-one days had passed from the time Major Washington had left Williamsburg with Gov. Dinwiddie's letter, when he presented it to the commandant at French Creek, about fifteen miles south of Lake Erie. He was very politely received; and, during the two days which the French officer required for writing his answer, he examined the fort, counted the men and the canoes there, and collected all the information he could for the governor.

When he was ready to return, it was almost impossible to start the Indians. By presents and promises, the French delayed them until Major Washington became very anxious. The party at last set out in canoes;* but French Creek was full of ice, and

* Indian boats, made of the trunks of trees, or sometimes of bark.

it was very hard to manage them. When they began to ride, matters became still worse. The horses were soon worn out with travelling in deep snow. There were neither houses nor barns. The men slept in tents, and the animals fared hardly. Washington gave up his own horse to carry the baggage, and all the men walked.

At last he grew very tired of this slow method of travelling, and determined to leave the party, and strike through the woods for the nearest branch of the Ohio River. A Mr. Gist went with him; and the first day they met an Indian, whom they took as guide. Gist knew the Indians well, and both he and Washington soon began to suspect this man. From his behavior, they thought he was trying to lead them to a place where they might be surrounded and killed. What could two white men do against a party of Indians? Towards evening, the Indian, who was a little in front of them, turned, and fired his gun at Mr. Gist. He was not hurt; and the two secured the Indian before he could fire again. Gist was for putting him immediately to death; but Washington would not consent to that. They were obliged to watch him very minutely; and at last, in order to get rid of him, they gave him leave to go



Major Washington preventing Gist from killing the Indian.



to his cabin. Gist followed him, and listened to his steps to be sure that he was out of the way; and then the travellers took up their march again, though they had encamped for the night because Major Washington was weary.

They went on anxiously, all that night and all the next day, till they reached the Alleghany River. There was no boat to be seen: they must make a raft, and they had only one poor hatchet. They worked at the raft a whole day; launched it at dusk, and tried to cross the river: but the raft got jammed between cakes of ice. Washington put his pole on the bottom of the river, and leaned against it; but the ice came down with such force that he was thrown off the raft into deep water. He and Gist then succeeded in getting upon an island, where they passed the night. Mr. Gist's hands and feet were frozen. The next day, they crossed on the ice to a house where they were made comfortable.

The dangers of the journey were over; but all the rest of the way was as uncomfortable as very bad weather could make it. While Major Washington was waiting for horses, he paid a visit to an Indian queen. What do you think he gave her? "A watch-coat," he says, "and a bottle of rum;

which latter was thought much the better present of the two."

On the 16th of January, 1754, he was again at Williamsburg, and gave Gov. Dinwiddie the letter of the French commandant.

His journal of this trip was published,—a compliment much more marked at that time than it would be now; for rough journeys through unsettled country were not unusual then, while printing was far less common than it is among us.

The next spring, the Virginia soldiers were early in the field. Washington might have commanded the whole body; but he preferred to be the second officer, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.* With a small force, he worked his way over the mountains towards the Ohio River, preparing the roads for heavy cannon.

He found it very difficult to get men to enlist. Provisions were to be collected, and carried along; and the farmers were very slow to furnish horses and wagons. The officers, also, were dissatisfied because Virginia gave them much smaller pay than

* A colonel commands a regiment. A lieutenant-colonel is the next officer below him; and a major the next.

the king's troops received from England. They considered their work very hard; and Col. Washington agreed with them that they deserved equal pay.

The Indians, also, were a great care. Sometimes they brought their families to the camp and lived there. They were to be fed, and kept in good-humor. The French always gave them presents; but Gov. Dinwiddie did not always supply Col. Washington with such articles as pleased their fancy.

Washington wrote constantly to the governor to tell what he had done; to ask the Colony to be more liberal; to mention the soldiers' wants, which were very pressing; and to beg the governor to settle difficulties which arose with troops from South Carolina. Yet, through all these cares, he kept a watchful eye on the French.

During this summer he fought his first battle. It was rather a skirmish than a battle; for there were very few soldiers on either side. One day in May he received from the Half-king (an Indian friend of the year before) a message, saying that the French were on their march to meet him. Their tracks were seen by the Indians, and there was an alarm

at camp. It was necessary to be on the alert ; for the French had a great many more men, and might shut the troops in on all sides, so as to prevent a retreat. But no enemy came in sight for two days ; and, at the end of that time, Washington, with forty men and a few Indians, went at night to find them. A party of French troops was encamped on low ground, surrounded by rocks and trees. Washington was the first on the spot. His men were much exposed ; but the French retreated, and several prisoners were taken.

In the postscript of a letter to his brother, Washington alludes to this affair, and adds : “ I fortunately escaped without any wound ; for the right wing, where I stood, was exposed to and received all the enemy’s fire ; and it was the part where the man was killed, and the rest wounded. I heard the bullets whistle ; and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.”

The letter was published, and these words happened to come to the ears of King George II. “ He would not say so,” observed the king, dryly, “ if he had been used to hear many.” “ Washington himself thought so when more experienced in warfare. Being asked, many years afterwards, if he

really had made such a speech about the whistling of bullets, 'If I said so,' replied he, quietly, 'it was when I was young.' He was, indeed, but twenty-two years old when he said it. It was just after his first battle. He was flushed with success, and was writing to a brother."

The danger of his position was much increased by this little action ; for he expected a large French force immediately to avenge the defeat. He prepared himself as well as possible, and the Half-king promised more Indians.

Later in the season, Washington employed his men in making a military road. While thus occupied, he received news that the French would soon be upon him. It was necessary that all the troops should be united on one spot ; and all the officers agreed that Great Meadows, near the Youghiogeny River, in the southwest part of Pennsylvania, was the proper place. A small fort had already been built there. A retreat was accordingly begun ; but the road was rough, the guns were heavy, and the men out of spirits. The work seemed much harder for some of them than for others, on account of the differences of pay and rank, previously mentioned. Washington and the other officers gave up their

horses on the march ; and when they began to strengthen the fort, he joined with his men in cutting down trees, and rolling up the trunks to form a breast-work. Their movements were not at all too speedy. The French and Indians soon made their appearance, and firing was kept up on both sides for a day. "Col. Washington, in person, continued outside the fort the whole day, encouraging the soldiers by his countenance and example." At night the French offered to treat with him ; and Washington agreed to give up the fort, on condition that he and his troops should be free to march home without any trouble from the enemy. They were also to carry away all their possessions except the cannon, which were to be destroyed ; and to send back the prisoners taken in May.

It was afterwards found that Washington and the French had understood some of the articles of this agreement quite differently. This, however, is not strange, as they were written in French, which Washington could not read, and were translated into English by a Dutchman.

When Washington arrived at Williamsburg, and made his report to the Governor, he received the thanks of the Colony for his services. He was al-

ready a marked man in Virginia; but in the following autumn, he withdrew from her military service on account of the Governor's lowering the rank of all Virginia officers.

He had, however, no more than time to attend to his private business before he received an invitation which was most agreeable to him. In the spring of 1755, Gen. Braddock commanded an expedition against Fort Duquesne.* Two regiments, each of about five hundred men, had come from England, with cannon, light horse, and all the appointments of a well-equipped army. Some Provincial troops and Indians also swelled the number. Washington had never seen such complete preparations for war. He longed for a share in the glory of the campaign;† and Gen. Braddock, hearing of his past experience and merits, invited him to be one of his aides-de-camp.‡ Gen. Braddock had seen much service, and was extremely exact in military discipline. He

* A French fort at the meeting of the Monongahela and Alleghany Rivers, where the town of Pittsburg now stands.

† A single season of fighting, perhaps one summer, is called a campaign.

‡ Officers who deliver a general's orders on a field of battle, write for him, and live in his family in camp.

was hasty-tempered and obstinate, but an honorable man.

Washington's mother dreaded the dangers of frontier war so much, that she went to Mount Vernon to beg of him not to expose himself to them again. But not all his respect for her could induce him to give up such an opportunity of gaining information and distinction.

The army marched from Alexandria, in Virginia, to Fort Cumberland, in Maryland; thence to Little Meadows, to Fort Necessity, and to Great Meadows, in Pennsylvania, where Washington had commanded the year before; thence on towards Fort Duquesne.

When they were about starting, Washington looked with dismay at the amount of baggage which was thought necessary. He, who knew well the roads, and the want of roads, dreaded the labor of carrying such heavy loads through the mountainous country before them. But Gen. Braddock thought little of the opinion of a young gentleman who had never fought out of the Provinces.

The march was very slow; for the General could not be persuaded to alter any part of the system which would have been useful in a civilized country.

He was perpetually delayed for want of horses, wagons, and forage ; * and he had neither patience nor skill in dealing with the Indians and the half-wild hunters of the frontier, † who might have been very useful to him.

At every halt, Washington diligently studied the arrangement and discipline of the army ; but he was amazed, and rather disgusted, at the luxurious habits of the officers. What seemed to him most unnecessary articles weighed down the baggage-wagons.

At last, after a struggle over the Alleghany Mountains, Gen. Braddock bent his pride to ask Washington's advice. It was readily but modestly given. He proposed to the general to divide the army ; to advance himself to Fort Duquesne with his lightest and choicest troops ; and to leave the heavy guns, the baggage, and all that could delay a march, to be brought on afterwards. In his judgment, it was of great importance to save time, and to reach the fort before the French could be reinforced.

* Hay, straw, and oats, for the horses of an army.

† The border of a country, often used when one part is settled and the other uninhabited.

His advice was accepted, but hardly acted upon. The officers of the advance still required a great deal of baggage. Washington himself took only what would half fill a trunk : he also gave up his best horse to serve as a pack-horse, it being the fourth he had lost during the season. The march seemed to him a very slow style of proceeding. In a letter to his brother, he says : "I found, that, instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding a little rough road, they were halting to level every molehill, and erect bridges over every brook ; by which means we were four days in getting twelve miles."

Perhaps he had some reason to be glad of this slowness ; for, on the 24th of June, he was so ill with fever and headache, which he had been struggling against for several days, that he was ordered by the general to remain behind. At the same time, Braddock gave him his word of honor that he should rejoin the advanced part of the army before the attack on the fort. Washington confided to Capt. Orne, another aid, that he would not miss it for five hundred pounds. He was obliged to wait until the 3d of July ; and after travelling for five days in a covered wagon through a rough

country, he reached the army the day before the battle. The troops had had a most toilsome, anxious march, with the Indians perpetually infesting them, firing from secret places, and picking off a man or two at a time.

On the 9th of July, the army turned out in full array, with drums beating, colors flying, every regiment in orderly ranks, and all in high spirits, confident of victory. They crossed a ford of the Monongahela, and wound along its banks shortly after sunrise; and Washington was so delighted with their appearance, that he not only spoke of it at the time, but used in after life to describe the effect which this first sight of a gallant army had upon him. About noon they crossed a second ford, and began to ascend a rising ground. It was wooded, with no opening but a road about twelve feet wide, and had on both sides deep ravines entirely hidden by trees and bushes.

Gen. Braddock had scorned a recommendation of Washington's to use Indian scouts or Virginian woodsmen to explore such thickets; but suddenly his advanced troops under Col. Gage were attacked by a party of French and Indians, and thrown utterly into confusion. The men refused

to obey the orders of their colonel, and fell back. Gen. Braddock ordered up more troops from the rear, kept the centre of the field himself, and vainly endeavored to form platoons.* It was a last and foolish attempt to adhere to a system utterly unsuited to the place. The only chance of safety was in scattering, and fighting in Virginian, or rather Indian fashion, from behind trees. Panic became general; for the enemy seemed invisible; they fought from the ravines, of which the English knew nothing. Washington admired greatly the bravery of the officers, and equally attracted their attention by his composure and gallantry. The other aids were wounded early in the day, and he alone carried all the general's orders to every part of the field. Two horses were shot under him, and four bullets passed through his coat. All the horrors of the scene seemed only to rouse his ardor, and he made every effort to animate the men. At one time he was sent to bring the artillery into action. He found the men paralyzed with fear. Their commander had fallen at the head of his regiment. Washington sprang off his horse, wheeled and

* A platoon is composed of about fifty men, arranged in a double row.

pointed a cannon, and fired into the woods,—a place where clearing was much needed; but all was in vain. The soldiers were utterly daunted, and it is said that the yells of the Indians dismayed them even more than their firing.

At last, after having seen his brave officers fall by tens about him, Gen. Braddock received a mortal wound, and was with great difficulty carried off the field. In his despair, he desired to be left there to die.

Then flight became general; every man escaped as best he might. The French and Indians were prevented from pursuing them by the rich booty they found on the battle-field.

The first care of the survivors was to collect the scattered remnants of their once gay army, and to provide for the wounded. Gen. Braddock died four days after the battle, at Great Meadows,—the scene of Washington's surrender the year before. It is said that, in his last moments, he apologized to Col. Washington for the manner in which he had rejected his advice, and left him a favorite horse, and his faithful servant Bishop, who had helped to carry him from the field. He also expressed much gratitude for the kindness of the Virginians; but

his spirit was broken by the humiliation of such a defeat.*

Washington, still weak from his severe illness, accompanied the wounded officers to Fort Cumberland. The panic spread from the soldiers to the country people, and terrible reports of the destruction of the whole army ran from mouth to mouth. Washington wrote to his mother to assure her of his safety. To his brother he says: "As I have heard, since my arrival at this place, a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you that I have not yet composed the latter. But, by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, though death was levelling my companions on every side of me. We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men; but fatigue, and want of time, prevent me from giving you any of the details until I have the happiness of seeing

* He, however, never knew that the whole force of the enemy consisted of but eight hundred and fifty-five men, — a mere detachment from the main French army.

you at Mount Vernon; which I most earnestly wish for, since we are driven in thus far. A feeble state of health obliges me to halt here for two or three days to recover a little strength, that I may thereby be enabled to proceed homeward with more ease."

Washington made only a halt at Mount Vernon; for, in August, the command of all the Virginia forces was offered to him.* This is a proof of the position he held in "the Old Dominion," at the age of twenty-three, when his only military experience had been that of disaster and defeat. His abilities had been perceived, without the light of success to exhibit them; and his fellow-citizens believed that his wisdom might have saved Gen. Braddock's army. He writes to his brother: "So little am I dispirited at what has happened, that I am always ready and always willing to render my country any services that I am capable of, but never upon the terms I have done; having suffered much in my private fortune, besides impairing one of the best of constitutions."

* The governor wrote to England that he had given this command to Col. George Washington, "a man of great merit and resolution"; and adds on the subject of commissions, "I am convinced, if Gen. Braddock had survived, he would have recommended Mr. Washington to the royal favor."

Just before he received the news of his appointment, his mother wrote to him, urging him to remain at home. He answered her that he would avoid the offer, if possible; but that, if it were pressed upon him on such terms "that it would reflect dishonor on him to refuse it," he was sure that would give her more uneasiness than his going "in an honorable command." This appears to have been the last time that Mrs. Washington interfered at all with her son's plans. She was less ambitious of his military distinction than he at this time; but it is likely that, with "a high temper, and a spirit of command," Washington inherited from her the readiness to sacrifice his own wishes to the public service which distinguished him through life.

His new command gave him a rank that satisfied him; and he felt, from the beginning, that he could not be more needed in any place than on a frontier open to the stealthy but fierce attacks of the Indians. He fixed his head-quarters at Winchester, Virginia; and endeavored to protect and calm the neighborhood, which was in a state of terrible panic, not only from the murders and plunderings actually committed by the Indians, but from false alarms, which were caused by the merest trifle. The sight of

strangers near a solitary house, the noise of a few drunken soldiers, would alarm a whole county, and send expresses riding night and day to find Col. Washington.

Yet he had the greatest difficulty in inducing men to enlist. The country was unused to war; and every man thought he could protect his own family and farm best by staying with them, rather than by joining the regiment to fight for the common good. The government, too, had little idea of the expenses of war, and kept the Commander-in-chief but scantily supplied with money. His letters to Gov. Dinwiddie frequently mention the soldiers' wants. Pay, food, clothes, or shoes, fell short; and all complaints were, of course, carried at once to the Colonel, who, in his turn, was obliged to apply to the Governor and Council, or to the House of Burgesses.* It was difficult for him to obtain supplies from those country people who had not yet been paid for the provisions or wagons furnished to Braddock's army.

He wrote very earnestly to the Governor, about

* This, in a Colony, was like the present House of Representatives in a State.

the military laws of the Colony, as they rather hindered than helped the discipline which he was very anxious to keep up. After much delay, he succeeded in getting them altered. His military knowledge, acquired by reading,* and by his own severe experience, was of great use at this time; and while he spared no pains to have his men well drilled according to rule, he prepared them to meet the Indians by constant practice in "bush-fighting."

Though busy with these duties, Col. Washington did not fail to watch the progress of the war at the North. This French and Indian war was carried on in Canada and New York, as well as near the Ohio; and the New England Colonies also sent their share of men to the field.

In February, 1756, Col. Washington was sent to Boston to procure Gen. Shirley's decision of a question of military rank which had caused a dispute between Maryland and Virginia. Also it was hoped that he would learn the plans for the next season.

* In an address to his officers at this time, he says: "Do not forget that there ought to be a time appropriated to attain knowledge, as well as to indulge in pleasure; and, as we now have no opportunities to improve from example, let us read for this desirable end."

This was his first visit to cities ; but his fame had gone before him, and he was cordially welcomed in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Braddock's defeat was still talked of, and the name of Washington was not unknown. Those who expected to see a hero could not have been disappointed in his appearance ; * for he was tall, well proportioned, with a handsome face, and a noble, military air. He was a fine horseman, too, and always well mounted. Two other Virginia officers were with him, and no doubt the little party made a sensation.

In Boston, Washington accomplished his errand successfully. Gen. Shirley's decision placed him in a rank with which he was contented, though he would have liked very much to have been made a king's officer. The plan for the next summer included an attack on Fort Duquesne ; at which he, of course, expected to be present.

In New York, it is said that Col. Washington was quite charmed with Miss Mary Philipse,—a beauty,

* A little before this time, he sent orders to London for "three gold and scarlet sword-knots, two silver and blue ditto, one fashionable gold-laced hat"; also for liveries (a kind of uniform) for servants. Such things would hardly be used in the frontier camp. They probably appeared on the journey.

an heiress, and a very agreeable lady ; but business obliged him to go back to Virginia, probably before he had made her aware of his feelings.

The summer of 1756 was a distressing one at Winchester. The Indians burnt the houses and murdered the families of the settlers. Those who escaped with their lives fled to the fort. There was danger that the most beautiful country in Virginia would be left desolate. Women and children entreated Washington to save them, and his heart was wrung when he thought how little he could do for them. He wrote to Gov. Dinwiddie : " I am too little acquainted with pathetic language to attempt a description of these people's distresses. But what can I do ? I see their situation, I know their danger, and participate their sufferings, without having it in my power to give them further relief than uncertain promises. . . . The supplicating tears of the women, and moving petitions of the men, melt me into such deadly sorrow, that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that would contribute to the people's ease."

On receiving this letter, the Governor immediately ordered out the militia. Lord Fairfax, Wash-

ington's old friend, was already in the field, at the head of a troop of horse. But such help was not what Washington needed. He soon found that militia were the most troublesome and expensive kind of troops. They had no idea of obedience,—the first duty of a soldier; they wasted powder and provisions; and they insisted on going home the moment their time of service came to an end, let the danger to the town or fort they left be what it might.

These troubles it was Washington's lot to bear week after week, and month after month; but he very soon wrote to the Governor, that such services were not more trying to the commander than ruinous to the country. To make good soldiers, men must be trained, and accustomed to obey and to endure. The strength of farmers and workmen fails on the march with old soldiers.

At this time, some of the Virginia newspapers attacked pretty sharply the regiment and its commander. Washington wrote to the Governor: "I am sorry to hear of the reflections upon the conduct of the officers. I could wish their names had been particularized, that justice might be done to the innocent and guilty; for it is extremely hard that the whole

corps should suffer reproaches for the inadvertence or misconduct of a few." How "hard" it was for him, who had made every effort to raise the character of both officers and men ! He was so hurt, that, for a little while, he thought of resigning his command ; but very affectionate and encouraging letters from his friends, persons of influence in the Colony, reassured him, and he decided to remain at his post of duty, though not of distinction.

The House of Burgesses now voted a supply of money, which it was proposed to spend in building a chain of forts along the frontier. Col. Washington objected to the plan as too expensive, both in buildings and in men to garrison them ; but it was persisted in, and he was for a long time occupied in selecting the places. He practised, himself, the prompt obedience which he required of his men ; but it must have been no small trial to have had his suggestions entirely thrown aside, when they were the result of his observation and experience, — when he and his men, and the whole country, had suffered from the want of what he recommended, — and when he expressed himself in his letters fully and respectfully.

His correspondence with the Governor became

very embarrassing ; and, towards the close of this year, there was a marked change in the style of it, probably because the Governor on one occasion accused him of having used an *unmannerly* expression. Washington's self-command and sense of propriety led him to defend himself in respectful language, but his letters could not be so friendly as before. Gov. Dinwiddie was also excessively uncertain in his orders, and omitted to give Washington the information necessary to guide his movements. Washington asked for directions about Fort Cumberland in Maryland. "The following," says he, "is an exact copy of his answer: 'Fort Cumberland is a *king's* fort, and built chiefly at the charge of the Colony ; therefore, properly under our direction until a new governor is appointed.' Now, whether I am to understand this ay or no to the plain, simple question asked, 'Is the fort to be continued or removed?' I know not ; but, in all important matters, I am directed in this ambiguous and uncertain way."

— On another occasion, Col. Washington wrote to a friend: "Whence it arises, or why, I am truly ignorant ; but my strongest representations of matters relative to the frontiers are disregarded as idle

and frivolous, my propositions and measures as partial and selfish, and all my sincerest endeavors for the service of my country are perverted to the worst purposes. My orders are dark and uncertain: to-day approved, to-morrow disapproved."

The truth was, that Gov. Dinwiddie and some of his friends would have very much preferred another colonel in Washington's place. Some of these annoyances were intended to induce him to resign the command; others were caused by the Governor's ignorance. He had the vanity to wish to direct from a distance the motions of the troops, although he was quite ignorant of military matters.

In March, 1757, Washington asked leave to meet Lord Loudoun, then commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, at Philadelphia, to learn the plans for the next campaign. The Governor wrote that Lord Loudoun was to consult the Southern governors; "therefore I cannot conceive what service you can be of in going there, as the plan concerted will, in course, be communicated to you and the other officers. However, as you seem so earnest to go, I now give you leave."

Washington had very good reason to believe that Lord Loudoun had been prejudiced against him by

false statements; he therefore, a month before his visit, sent a letter describing fully the condition of things in Virginia;—the want of men, money, clothes, and tools; the trouble and expense of building and keeping up forts; the imperfect military laws; and the cunning and fierceness of the Indians and French. He concluded with a hope that he and his regiment might receive king's * commissions. Of his men he says: "I must beg leave to say, that the regiment has not been inactive; on the contrary, it has performed a vast deal of work, and has been very alert in defending the people. This will appear from the fact, that notwithstanding we are nearer the French and their Indian allies, and more exposed to their frequent incursions than any of the neighboring Colonies, yet we have not lost half the number of inhabitants that others have done, but considerably more soldiers in their defence." Of himself he writes: "And now, before I conclude, I must beg leave to add, that my unwearied endeavors are inadequately rewarded. The orders I receive are full of ambiguity. I am left, like a wanderer in the wilderness,

* A commission gives authority to an officer to act according to his rank. It is usually signed by the king.

to proceed at hazard. I am answerable for consequences, and blamed without privilege of defence."

You can see from this letter, that, though Washington would not suffer himself to be driven from his post, he took pains to right himself where he believed he had been injured. Lord Loudoun received him cordially at Philadelphia; consulted him on many points of the next campaign; and directed him in future to correspond with Col. Stanwix, who became his friend.

The great efforts of the summer were to be in Canada; and Washington advised an attack on Fort Duquesne, saying that it would be an excellent opportunity, as the French troops would be withdrawn to the North. He had been longing to march into the enemy's country, being sure that one attack would do more good than all his continual defences. But, with his means, it had always been impossible. Nor would Lord Loudoun now agree to his plan. Col. Washington was also disappointed in getting his regiment placed on the same footing with the regular army. He was never to be the officer of any king.

The summer of 1757 wore on, with Washington pursuing the same tedious, painful course as in the

previous year. His force was still entirely insufficient to protect the people, who moved from their homes into the thickly settled country, so that the Colony was constantly growing smaller and smaller. "I exert every means," he wrote to Col. Stanwix, "to protect a much-distressed country; but it is a task too arduous. To think of defending a frontier of more than three hundred and fifty miles' extent, as ours is, with only seven hundred men, is vain and idle. . . . I am, and have for a long time been, fully convinced, that, if we continue to pursue a defensive plan, the country must be inevitably lost."

This year, Col. Washington was under two heads, as it were, — Col. Stanwix and Gov. Dinwiddie. The contrast in their modes of treating him was most striking. Col. Stanwix was courteous, kind, and liberal; the Governor was perpetually worrying, interfering, and ordering. On one occasion, a slanderous letter was sent to Washington, which he forwarded to the Governor, saying that it was clear to him that some person had detracted from his character, and that the Governor's conduct was changed towards him. He then goes on to defend himself, and adds: "That I have foibles, and per-

haps many of them, I shall not attempt to deny. I should esteem myself, as the world also would, vain and empty, were I to arrogate perfection. Knowledge in military matters is to be acquired by practice and experience only; and, if I have erred, great allowance should be made for the want of them, unless my errors should appear to be wilful; and then, I conceive, it would be more generous to charge me with my faults, and let me stand or fall according to evidence, than to stigmatize me behind my back."

In the Governor's answer to this letter, he advises Col. Washington not to give heed to every idle story he hears; and, after stating his own friendliness, accuses him of ingratitude. Towards the end of a business letter, Washington answers: "I do not know that I ever gave your Honor cause to suspect me of ingratitude, — a crime I detest, and would most carefully avoid. If an open, disinterested behavior causes offence, I may have offended; because I have all along laid it down as a maxim, to represent facts freely and impartially, but not more to others, sir, than to you. If instances of my ungrateful behavior had been particularized, I would have answered them; but I have long been con-

vinced that my actions and their motives have been maliciously misrepresented." In the same letter he requests leave to come to Williamsburg on public business. To which Dinwiddie answers: "I cannot agree to allow you to come down at this time. You have been frequently indulged with leave of absence. You know the fort is to be finished; I think you were quite wrong in asking it."

Happily, Washington had not many more of these scoldings to bear. In November, he was so ill with fever and dysentery, that he was obliged to leave his command, and spend the winter at Mount Vernon. In January, Gov. Dinwiddie sailed for England.

In April, 1758, Col. Washington, after a painful illness of four months, was again at Fort Loudoun, at Winchester. He was encouraged by the expectation, that, at last, his favorite plan of taking Fort Duquesne would be accomplished. Gen. Forbes, who commanded the expedition, and all his officers, were disposed to treat Washington with great respect and attention. He began with much spirit to prepare his men for an active campaign, and to apply for tents, clothing, and other necessities. He wrote to a friend: "My dear Halket, are we

to have you once more among us? and shall we revisit together a hapless spot, that proved so fatal to many of our former brave companions? Yes: and I rejoice at it, hoping it will now be in our power to testify a just abhorrence of the cruel butcheries exercised on our friends in the unfortunate day of Gen. Braddock's defeat; and, moreover, to show our enemies that we can practise all that lenity of which they only boast, without affording any adequate proofs."

But it was Col. Washington's fate in this campaign, as well as every other in which he had to unite with regulars,* to have his patience sorely tried by long delays. He found to his distress that the British officers were unwilling to use Gen. Braddock's road, and chose to make a new one through Pennsylvania. He remonstrated, both by word of mouth and by letter. His reasons seemed quite unanswerable, and experience was on his side; but he could not convince the general. It was a great disappointment to him that so much time must be spent in road-making. In one of his letters to

* Soldiers who belong to an army, and whose only business is fighting. Militia-men, who come from the plough or the forge, are irregular troops.

a friend, he says: "If this opinion be acted upon, all is lost indeed; our enterprise will be ruined; and we shall be stopped at the Laurel Hill this winter, but not to gather *laurels*, except of the kind that covers the mountains."

While he was passing the tedious summer in waiting for the army, and superintending the making of a road, he received permission from his superior officer (in different style from Gov. Dinwiddie's) to go from Fort Cumberland to Winchester, where his election to a seat in the House of Burgesses took place. He declined the offer; preferring to let that matter be managed by his friends, rather than quit his post.

Earlier in this season, however, a business trip of Washington's had proved most important to him. He was sent from Winchester to Williamsburg to procure from the Council of Virginia the equipment which was absolutely necessary for the Virginia regiment. He travelled, as usual, on horseback; and, falling in with a Mr. Chamberlayne, was urged by him to dine at his house. Washington was quite unwilling to stop; but Virginian hospitality seldom takes "No" for an answer, and he dismounted. Mrs. Martha Custis was one of the

guests at table, — “a young and blooming widow, with an agreeable countenance, dark-hazel eyes and hair, and those frank and engaging manners, so captivating in Southern women.” After dinner, Bishop brought the horses to the door, according to orders. There they stood. “For once, Washington loitered in the path of duty”; and it was not till the next morning that he was on the road again, spurring in all haste for Williamsburg. He had but a few days to spend on his business. He visited Mrs. Custis as often as possible, and she did not require a long time to study his noble character. When he turned his face westward again, she had promised to marry him at the end of the campaign. Perhaps this was one reason why he was eager for action: his “laurels” would have been won as much for her gratification as for his own glory. They corresponded constantly through the summer.

In September, an attack on Fort Duquesne was rashly made by Major Grant, who was sent forward with a detachment. His troops were beaten back with terrible loss, and the only men who distinguished themselves were a part of Washington’s Virginia regiment. He was publicly complimented by Gen. Forbes on their “gallant conduct.”

He and his regiment were also placed in the advance in their chilly November march. Here he could, at least, have the privilege of sending out as many scouts as he judged best. It was cold, hard work to make a road at that season. As they drew near the fort, they saw on Braddock's field the whitening bones of those who fell there. How Washington must have remembered that day of horrors two years and a half before!

When they reached Fort Duquesne, it had been deserted by the French and partly burned. The ruins were strengthened; and two hundred men of Washington's regiment were left to garrison it, under the name of Fort Pitt. The French had abandoned it in consequence of their defeats at the North; and, after the French were gone, the Indians became very quiet.

At the end of this year, Col. Washington resigned his commission. Always faithful to his men, one of his last letters to the Governor contains a most pressing entreaty that the wants of those left at Fort Pitt may be supplied. His officers, at parting, made him a very affectionate and grateful address.

And this was the end of Washington's early mil-

itary career. He had not had the opportunity to distinguish himself as some soldiers do, by winning great victories; but he had been faithful, just, wise, and self-sacrificing, in the place where it had pleased Heaven to place him. He had borne patiently hardships, disappointments, and injustice; and had gained, as he deserved, the good opinion of the Virginians.

This experience of his youth was a remarkable preparation for what he had afterwards to undergo. Frontier war was Washington's school; and you will see that every lesson he there learned was useful to him in the Revolutionary war. Neither he nor any one else could know, at the time, how valuable these years were to him.

Col. Washington was married to Mrs. Custis on the 6th of January, 1759. It was a joyful event, and a large party of friends and relations met to celebrate it in the "good old hospitable style of Virginia."

For the next sixteen years, Washington's life passed quietly and contentedly. Mrs. Washington made him very happy in his home. She was gentle and polite; free from vanity, or love of show; dignified in her behavior; remarkably kind and thoughtful; and truly religious.

Washington had no children, but was very fond of his wife's son and daughter by her former marriage. He was their guardian, directed their education, and took care of their property. Mrs. Washington also had a large fortune; and the care of these estates, in addition to his own, occupied much of his time.

He was a member of the House of Burgesses; and always studied the business of every day carefully, though he seldom made speeches. When he first took his seat, in 1759, just after his marriage, the Speaker of the House* returned thanks to him, in the name of the Colony, for his services during the war. "Washington rose to reply; blushed, stammered, trembled, and could not utter a word." "Sit down, Mr. Washington," said the Speaker with a smile: "your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

Public and private business filled up so much of Washington's time, that his life on his plantation could not be called an idle one. At that time, a lively, easy way of living was the custom among

* A member who is chosen to keep order, and arrange the business of the House.

the Virginians. They visited each other on their estates; entertained strangers with great hospitality; and had more fine horses, carriages, and silver plate than any other Colony. When a British man-of-war anchored in the Potomac, tea-parties on board, given by the officers, were returned by all sorts of gayeties at the neighboring plantations. Col. and Mrs. Washington occasionally went to Annapolis, the capital of Maryland, where they made many friends; and stories are still told of Washington's dancing at balls. Mrs. Washington rode in a chariot with four horses, and black servants in livery. The Colonel always kept very fine horses for himself and guests, and many dogs, chiefly fox-hounds; for he had not lost his love for hunting, and old Lord Fairfax sometimes came from Greenway Court to try the woods of Mount Vernon with his former pupil. It does not appear from Washington's Diary that he was a very successful hunter, though so fond of the sport. •

The names of his horses and dogs, like everything else belonging to him, were written down in lists in his own handwriting. He kept his accounts with the greatest care; and it must have been no small labor, as he had always to separate charges

made for his wards* from his own. Every year, the tobacco was shipped from his plantation to England; and his agent in London, having sold it for the best price he could get, sent to him an account of the money, with all sorts of articles which the Americans then bought in England. Washington's letters contain most exact orders for all the wants of the family;—sometimes saddles and bridles; sometimes clothes for himself, for Mrs. Washington, and the young Custises; or liveries for the servants. Every luxury, like a game, a book, or a musical instrument, came from England. The necessities of life were usually to be had on the large plantations, where one slave was a blacksmith, and another a carpenter. Some were employed as grooms in the stable; others, as servants in the house.

The Potomac River abounded in fish, so that both the shore and the woods of Mount Vernon supplied luxuries for the table. But Washington was never fond of good eating. His active habits gave him an excellent appetite; but he kept to his youthful rule

* Orphans for whom a guardian is appointed by a judge. Master and Miss Custis were Washington's wards.

(number fifty-two), "Make no show of taking great delight in your victuals, neither find fault with what you eat." He usually rode about his estate every pleasant morning; and work was done under his own eye, and therefore well done. The flour sent from Mount Vernon for sale in the West Indies was always so good, that, when his mark was seen, the usual examination of the barrel was omitted.

Washington was kind to his negroes, careful of their comfort, and especially attentive to the sick; but he never indulged them in laziness. If any accident happened, he was immediately on the spot, working with his own hands. At one time (1763) he was very actively engaged in a scheme for draining the Great Dismal Swamp, and was one of the Virginia Board of Commissioners for settling the accounts of the French and Indian war. Gov. Dinwiddie had, in one of his proclamations, promised two hundred thousand acres of land to the officers and soldiers, to be divided among them according to rank.

Washington interested himself warmly in the matter; wrote a great many letters about it; and finally determined to take a journey to the Ohio River, that he might learn for himself the state of

the country, and the value of the land. He left Mount Vernon on the 5th of October, 1770, and reached home again on the 1st of December. Dr. Craik, a neighbor and companion in arms, who had been present at Braddock's defeat, went with him. They proceeded to Pittsburg; went down the Ohio in a boat to the mouth of the Great Kanawha; entered it to examine the beautiful lands on both sides of it; and returned in the same way. It was rather an adventurous trip, and would naturally remind Washington of some of his youthful journeys through the wilderness; but it must have been strange to him to travel peacefully to Fort Pitt.* He had a great deal of shooting; for the country abounded in buffaloes and deer, as well as swans, geese, ducks, and many other wild birds. He also had, as in former times, frequent interviews with the Indians, who made him long speeches, expressing their affection for the English. At one place he met Kiashuta, who had gone with him to the fort on French Creek seventeen years before (in 1753). Kiashuta remembered him well, and insisted on

* The town was then a very small one, which had sprung up near the fort.

entertaining him in Indian style. At the mouth of the Great Kanawha, another old sachem came to see him, who told him that he had fired from ambush on the dreadful day of Braddock's defeat, and both himself and his young men had often aimed at Washington as he rode about delivering the general's orders ; but, as they could not hit him, they had concluded that he was under the protection of the Great Spirit, and could not be slain in battle.

The business of the journey was successfully accomplished. Washington marked the land selected for the soldiers, and his own portion. But the Indians, who had been hostile a short time before, had another outbreak, a little after his return ; so that a slight delay might have made his visit to them a dangerous proceeding.

In the year 1773, the happiness of the home at Mount Vernon was sadly interrupted by the death of Miss Custis, Mrs. Washington's only daughter. It was a great grief to Washington, not only for her mother's sake, but for his own ; and, though he did not usually give way to his feelings, "kneeling by her bedside, he poured out earnest prayers for her recovery." He had also some little difficulties in the education of her brother, whom Mrs. Washing-

ton, especially after the death of his sister, was disposed to indulge rather too much.

While these years of Washington's life had passed so peacefully at home, he had taken his share in the political interests of Virginia; and Virginia was closely connected with the other Colonies, particularly with Massachusetts. Between the end of the French and Indian war in 1763, and the year 1774, a great change gradually took place in the feelings of the colonists towards England, — "home," as Washington calls it in a letter written as late as 1769. The Americans looked upon certain laws, passed by Parliament for raising money, as an attack upon their liberty. They constantly claimed the freedom of *English* subjects, and would not admit that their having come across the water made any difference in their rights. The Assemblies of the various Colonies sent addresses to the king and to Parliament, which were very respectful, and expressed great love for the British Constitution, but a determination to maintain their rights. These were all entirely useless, and were called in England rebellious and undutiful. Neither the government nor the colonists would yield; and, as years passed,

the discontented feeling grew strong. Sometimes there were mobs and riots in the cities, not important in themselves, but showing the spirit of the people. Washington watched the course of events, and often went back to Mount Vernon, from a meeting of the House of Burgesses, with an anxious mind. He sympathized entirely with the colonists, but saw that the British government was bent on putting them down, and dreaded the end of such a state of things.

Boston was the place most offensive to the government, and troops were sent there to keep the citizens quiet. Soldiers had not much to do; for the people were usually very orderly in their behavior. Their excitement showed itself in speeches at public meetings, in writings in the newspapers, and in addresses to the people of the other Colonies; but they were not riotous, and the presence of a garrison only made them angry without being of any use.

Virginia, with her usual high spirit, felt warmly every injury to Massachusetts; and the House of Burgesses was twice dismissed by the Governor on account of resolutions passed concerning the affairs of Massachusetts. As usual, Washington made himself perfectly familiar with all the facts and with all

the papers, and took so important a part in the debates among the Burgesses, and at several public meetings, that he was chosen a delegate to the first American *Congress*,—a meeting of gentlemen from all the Colonies, which took place at Philadelphia in September, 1774. His opinions at this time are given in a letter to Mr. Bryan Fairfax, a friend of his from childhood, who could not, at a public meeting, agree to oppose himself so decidedly to the mother country as his neighbors had done. Here follow some extracts from the letter:—“What is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of threepence a pound on tea, because burdensome? No, it is the right only that we have all along disputed; and, to this end, we have already petitioned his majesty in as humble and dutiful a manner as subjects could do. I think the Parliament of Great Britain have no more right to put their hands into my pocket, without my consent, than I have to put mine into yours; and, this being already urged to them, in a firm but decent manner, by all the Colonies, what reason is there to expect anything from their justice? For my own part, I shall not undertake to say where the line between Great Britain and her Colonies should be

drawn ; but I am clearly of opinion that one ought to be drawn, and our rights clearly ascertained.”

The first business of the first Congress was to make a declaration of rights claimed by the Colonies, and to name the Acts of Parliament by which they considered that those rights had been attacked. An address was also prepared to the king, another to the people of Great Britain, and a third to the inhabitants of Canada and the other British Provinces ; and it was agreed that the colonists should no longer buy British goods. All these papers were written with so much power, that Lord Chatham, the most distinguished English statesman then living, spoke of them as masterpieces.

It is not possible now to find out what share Washington had in the resolutions of this first Congress ; but as many of them are extremely like those passed at a meeting in Fairfax County, Virginia, where he presided, it is at least fair to suppose that he had considerable influence in writing them.

This Congress was made up of distinguished men from the various Colonies, who had heard of each other, but had never met before ; and it is said that they hesitated a little in beginning their business, partly from awe of each other, and partly from

knowing that they were acting for a nation, and that most solemn consequences might follow from their measures. Each man's powers were soon found out. Some were brilliant speakers, who could rouse the enthusiasm of all the others; some were skilful writers; some were learned lawyers, familiar with the British Constitution; and some were workers, who wasted neither time nor words, but did what was needful.

After his return home from this Congress, Mr. Patrick Henry, a distinguished orator of Virginia, was asked by one of his neighbors, "whom he thought the greatest man in Congress." He replied, "If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Col. Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor." It is evident from Washington's Diary that his company was much sought by the Philadelphians and by other members of Congress. He always valued highly the wisdom which is to be gained by knowing a variety of characters, and now associated freely with gentlemen from distant parts of the country. At Mount Vernon, too, his hospitality was always open

to a stranger; and for many years his reputation had naturally drawn there persons well worth knowing.

During this year (1774) more troops were landed in Boston, and the people were still more indignant against the government. They looked forward to dark days. The military spirit of the Colony was aroused, and volunteer companies armed and drilled themselves. Still, though expecting to fight, the Americans did not think they should be separated from the mother country. In a letter written by Washington at Philadelphia, on the 9th of October, to a British officer then on duty in Boston, he says: "Although you are taught to believe that the people of Massachusetts are rebellious, — setting up for independency and what not, — give me leave, my good friend, to tell you that you are abused, grossly abused. . . . Give me leave to add, — and I think I can announce it as a fact, — that it is not the wish or interest of that government, or of any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence; but this you may at the same time rely on, that none of them will ever submit to the loss of those valuable rights and privileges which are essential to the happiness of every free State, and without which life, liberty, and property are rendered totally insecure."

After his return to Mount Vernon from this Congress, Col. Washington's instruction and advice were frequently asked by the independent companies of Virginia. He often left home to review those raised in distant parts of the Province, and accepted the command of one at Richmond. In a note, dated March 25, to his brother, who had offered him another, he says that he shall very cheerfully accept the honor of commanding it, "if occasion require it to be drawn out, as it is my full intention to devote my life and fortune to the cause we are engaged in, if needful."

In March, 1775, Washington was present at the second Virginia Convention, where the means of defending the Colony were discussed, and plans arranged for collecting money and drilling men. Washington conducted the business with his usual energy, and his opinion on such subjects was law to the other delegates.

The second Congress met on the 10th of May, 1775. Blood had already been shed in the contest between Great Britain and her Colonies. On the 19th of April, Gen. Gage had sent soldiers from Boston to Concord, Mass., to seize upon some military stores. The country people flew to arms; the

militia companies pursued the king's troops back to Boston at a rapid pace and with a brisk fire; and it was necessary to send out a second party to support the first. The soldiers found that the "rebels" were a foe not to be despised.

From that day, an army began to be formed about Boston. Officers of the French and Indian war brushed up their military learning, and came forward to take command. Brave bush-fighters hurried to Boston from the other Colonies. The sailor from Marblehead and the ploughman from Berkshire were equally ready to fight and to die for their liberty. The idea of the people was to shut up the troops in the town of Boston, and finally to drive them to the ships. It seemed as if the country could no longer endure their presence.

A second "humble and dutiful" address to the king was proposed in Congress, but could not be agreed to; though many people, Washington among the number, still thought a reconciliation possible. The members proceeded to their real business,—to arrange a union among the Colonies of New Hampshire,* Massachusetts,† Rhode Island, Con-

* Which then included Vermont.

† Which then included Maine.

necticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Georgia soon afterwards joined them. Each Colony was to govern itself, and Congress took charge of those matters which concerned the whole. They immediately ordered troops to be enlisted, forts to be built, and arms and powder to be provided. Washington was chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs. You can see in all these meetings what a working man he was. Something important always fell to his lot.

The next question was, what should be done with the army about Boston. It was collected: would it not break up, if Congress did not take charge of it? And, if it were broken up, what was there to restrain the British troops? It was agreed to maintain the army. Then who should command it? Gen. Artemas Ward, a Massachusetts man, who had served in the last war, had been appointed by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. Gen. Charles Lee was then in Philadelphia; and, though he was an Englishman, he had for years been bitter against the government, and was known to be now ready to serve in the American army. He had seen a great deal of war in many countries, and his repu-

tation was exaggerated on this side of the water. However, it was thought improper to give the command to any person of foreign birth; and the Southern delegates could not reconcile themselves to the idea of putting Gen. Ward, a New-England man, at the head of a New-England army. Finally, Mr. John Adams, of Massachusetts, proposed "a gentleman from Virginia who is among us, and very well known to all of us." As soon as Washington perceived that these remarks applied to him, he, "from his usual modesty," left his seat.

On the 16th of June, the President of Congress announced to him that he was chosen Commander-in-chief. Washington rose and expressed "his high and grateful sense of the honor conferred upon him, and his devotion to the cause. But," added he, "lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare, with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with." A salary had been proposed for him; but he refused it, and said that the country should pay only his expenses, of which he would keep an account.

At this time, so important in his life, Washing-

ton's thoughts turned to Mount Vernon. He wrote to his wife: "My dearest, I am now set down to write to you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress that the whole army raised for the defence of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it. You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every effort in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity; and I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you, at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. I shall feel no pain from the toil or danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. My earnest and ardent desire is, that you would pursue any plan that is

most likely to produce content, and a tolerable degree of tranquillity.”*

Gen. Washington left Philadelphia, on horseback, the 21st of June, accompanied by Gen. Lee and Gen. Schuyler. Gen. Schuyler was one of the bravest soldiers of the Revolution, and a firm friend of the Commander-in-chief. They had scarcely gone twenty miles from Philadelphia when they met a horseman, bearing to Congress, at full speed, the news of the battle of Bunker's Hill, the first battle of the Revolution. The British had finally gained possession of the hill; but their victory had been dearly bought. “Washington eagerly asked particulars: above all, how acted the militia? When told that they stood their ground bravely; sustained the enemy's fire; reserved their own until at close quarters,† and then delivered it with deadly effect, — it seemed as if a weight of doubt and solicitude

* This is the only letter from Washington to his wife that can now be found. It is believed that Mrs. Washington burnt all the others.

† When men are fighting very near each other, the battle is said to be at close quarters. Col. Prescott told the men on Bunker's Hill not to fire until they could see the whites of the eyes of the British soldiers.

were lifted from his heart. 'The liberties of the country are safe!' exclaimed he."

All through the journey, he was consulting with the two generals; for he was extremely modest and doubtful of his own powers, and had great respect for Lee's military talents; while Schuyler could give most useful information about the important Province of New York, — a difficult one to manage.

The party was escorted from place to place by volunteer companies; and, in the cities and towns, all honors were paid to the new Commander-in-chief. Every one was anxious to see him, and his bearing was worthy of the dignity of his cause and his character. He was at this time forty-three years old; tall, erect, military in his air, with a grave, noble face, that made all respect him.

At Springfield, Mass., some members of the Provincial Congress met him, and provided escorts and rooms for him all along the road. At Watertown, the Congress gave him an address of congratulation, in which they admitted that the army he had come to command was very undisciplined. As he reached the camp at Cambridge, the salute of artillery, and the shouts of the crowd collected to see him, gave notice of his arrival to the enemy in Boston. A

person who saw him writes : "I have been much gratified this day with a view of Gen. Washington. His Excellency was on horseback, in company with several military gentlemen. It was not difficult to distinguish him from all others. He is tall and well-proportioned, and his personal appearance is truly noble and majestic."

The next day (the 3d of July) the army was drawn up on Cambridge Common ; and Washington rode down from head-quarters,* accompanied by several officers, drew his sword under the great elm,† and took formal command. He then, with Gen. Lee, rode to all the fortified places and heights, that he might make himself acquainted with the country about Boston.

The army was spread over a distance of nearly twelve miles, from Mystic River to Dorchester. Some fortifications had been made on Roxbury Neck, then the only road from the little city to the country ; and on Prospect Hill, in what is now the town of Somerville, where Gen. Israel Putnam had command.

* Now Mr. Longfellow's house.

† Still standing, at the corner of Garden and Mason Streets, near the Common.

This old soldier, practised in Indian warfare, was a good specimen of the Yankee patriot. His home was in Connecticut. One day in April, when he was ploughing, a man on horseback passed along, proclaiming the news of the battle of Lexington. Putnam took the horse out of the plough, mounted, and rode full speed to Boston. And he was always so decided, prompt, and fearless. He was rather apt to be fond of his own inventions, and was certainly an old man for a general; but his influence in the army was very valuable. The younger officers became fond of him, and used to call him "old Put."

Gen. Washington was disappointed in the size of the army. He had expected to find twenty thousand men: there were really about fourteen thousand. They were quite undisciplined. Each man had left his home to fight for freedom, and had not the least idea that the best way to begin was to obey his superior officer, who was very likely to be a country neighbor, without any military dignity. Tents were wanting; clothes, guns, money; and, above all, the proper officers to furnish and distribute these necessities, had never been even thought of.

One encampment pleased Gen. Washington very

much: it was from Rhode Island, and compared well with the British posts for neatness, drill, and obedience. Gen. Nathanael Greene had disciplined and brought to camp this body of men, who did him great credit. Greene, as a boy, had been an anchor-smith with his father; but his mind was an extremely bright one, and he had studied a great deal by himself. Of late, he had been absorbed in military matters, and learnt everything he possibly could from observation of the British and from books. He immediately gained the confidence of the Commander-in-chief. He was wise, brave, cheerful under difficulties, a true patriot, a faithful friend, and helped Washington greatly at this time by his knowledge of the New-England character.

After this examination of the camp, Gen. Washington's first act was to write to Congress stating the many wants of the army. The troops from Massachusetts were the most destitute of all, and he attributes this to "the yoke having been laid so heavily on it. The deficiency of numbers, discipline, and stores can only lead to this conclusion, *that their spirit has exceeded their strength.*" Some persons in Washington's place would have blamed the Massachusetts people, who had been most for-

ward in the excitement before the war; but Washington, as Commander-in-chief of the united forces, already cared for all the Colonies alike.

His next object was to introduce discipline into the camp. General orders were read to the men every day. In these, the Commander-in-chief dwelt on the sacredness of the cause in which the army was fighting; on the importance of the soldiers' good behavior, both in the camp and on the field of battle; and on the duty of immediate obedience to the officers. He gave many directions about little every-day matters; but his great desire was to inspire both officers and men with the true spirit of a soldier. Gen. Lee's ideas of discipline were very strict, and he probably suggested many of the rules established at this time.

The works for defence already built were strengthened, and new ones begun. In this labor, Gen. Putnam's men were so active that Washington one day said to him, "You seem, General, to have the power of infusing your own spirit into all the workmen you employ."

Three grand divisions of the army were made. The right wing was stationed at Roxbury, the left on Prospect and Winter Hills, and the centre at

Cambridge. Saddled horses were kept at various points in the line, ready to carry news if the enemy made any movement; and men were stationed in the little villages along the coast to prevent landing from boats. You must bear in mind, that, when Boston was thus besieged by the Continental * troops, it was almost an island; there was no bridge anywhere connecting it with the country; and the narrow strip of land that leads to Roxbury was the only road by which soldiers could march in or out. Boats were frequently used, of course; and in time of peace there was a regular ferry to Charlestown.

In the course of the summer, some rifle companies arrived from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland. Such soldiers had never been seen in New England, and their shooting was much admired. It is said, that, "while advancing at a quick step, they could hit a mark seven inches in diameter at the distance of seven hundred and fifty feet." They were tall, strong men, — such "bush-fighters" as Washington had commanded in former days.

At this time, some of the towns on the coast were threatened by the British ships; and the inhabitants, and the governors of Colonies, sent to Gen.

* This was the name given to the American army.

Washington for assistance in defending them. After consulting with his officers, the Commander-in-chief refused to divide the army. He had not men enough with him; and, if he should send detachments to every place on the coast that might be in distress, he would never be able either to attack the British, or to guard his own lines* in case they should come out.

Cases as hard as this were constantly occurring through the Revolutionary war. People in distress appealed to Washington, for they had no king or president to look to, and he never had the means to grant what they desired. Those who suffered while they knew that some thousands of their countrymen were in camp, probably thought the General's decision very severe; but he had to think for *the whole*, while others saw only their own part. In the end, his wisdom was acknowledged. The work of the army was to finish the war, and that could be done only by keeping together. The places on the coast were defended by militia, or in whatever way each Colony thought fit.

* Lines are the intrenchments connecting one strong place with another. The army was spread out behind them to guard the country.

Gen. Washington had diligently strengthened his position, and would have been glad to attempt more active measures, when the fact was discovered that there was a scarcity of powder in the camp. In the account of stores furnished to the Commander-in-chief on his arrival, three hundred barrels of powder had been put down. On the 1st of August there were but thirty-two! Washington instantly wrote to Congress and to the governors of Colonies; and sent expresses to bring any quantity of powder, even the smallest, immediately to camp. The danger was frightful. If the enemy had attacked them, the army could not possibly have fought. It is now thought, that, by means of deserters and Tories,* the British generals must have been informed of this state of things, but that, seeing the Americans keep their position, they could not believe it. At the end of a fortnight, a small supply was received; but still the Americans were obliged to receive, without answering, an occasional firing from the enemy's cannon.

At this time a correspondence took place between Gen. Gage, the Commander-in-chief at Boston, and

* People who took sides with England.

Gen. Washington, concerning the treatment of prisoners.

It was not the first time they had written to each other. This Gen. Gage was the Col. Gage who in 1755 led the advanced troops at Braddock's defeat. Since that time, their positions were as much changed as their opinions; and Washington was quite resolved to claim an equal rank, and not to be regarded as a rebel. He wrote to say, that there were great complaints of the treatment of American prisoners by the British, and that he might be obliged to retaliate. This is common in all wars, and is meant to prevent cruelty. It is thought that generals will be careful of their prisoners, lest any injury inflicted on them should be avenged on their own men in the hands of the enemy.

Gen. Gage, in his answer, denied the charge of cruelty to the prisoners, "whose lives," he says, "by the law of the land, are destined to the cord"; thus showing that he considered them only rebels and traitors. But he admitted that he had made no difference between officers and private soldiers; "for," says he, "I acknowledge no rank that is not derived from the king." These and other expressions might well have roused Gen. Washington's anger; but his

answer was dignified and firm. In one passage he says: "You affect, sir, to despise all rank not derived from the same source with your own. I cannot conceive one more honorable than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people,—the purest source, and original fountain of all power." At the end of the letter are these words: "I shall now, sir, close my correspondence with you, perhaps for ever. If your officers, our prisoners, receive a treatment from me different from that which I wished to show them, they and you will remember the cause of it." In fact, Washington did order a number of British officers, his prisoners, to be confined in jail, explaining to them the reason; but the order was afterwards recalled, and the prisoners usually received the greatest kindness possible.

In July of this year, Congress determined to take possession of a fort at Ticonderoga, on Lake Champlain, which had been captured by some irregular troops from New England under Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold. Gen. Schuyler was therefore ordered to go from New York to Lake Champlain, and with the troops he found there, and others that he might collect, to make an attack upon Mon-

treal. Washington formed the plan of sending a body of troops into Canada, by way of the Kennebec River, to seize upon Quebec, and join the expedition under Schuyler. There were not then a great many soldiers in Canada, and it was understood that the people were disposed to sympathize with the Americans. The plan was a somewhat difficult one to carry out ; but Gen. Washington thought he had an officer well fitted for the command in Benedict Arnold, who had distinguished himself in the service of Massachusetts.

The troops started from Cambridge ; and, for nearly a year, Washington watched their fortunes with anxiety, sympathy, and hope. They had to bear many hardships, and showed the greatest courage. Col. Arnold, by his energy, perseverance, and daring, surpassed even Washington's expectations. He had some great successes ; but sickness, desertion, and loss in battle wasted away his troops, both before and after he joined the other party.

Gen. Schuyler was taken ill, and was succeeded by Gen. Montgomery, who was killed in an attack on Quebec ; Gen. Thomas died of small-pox ; and disasters followed so closely on every triumph, that, finally, only a broken remnant of the American

force came out of Canada. The commanders of this expedition wrote, of course, constantly to Gen. Washington, so that all their troubles weighed upon his mind in addition to his own. On the other hand, their successes sometimes cheered him when all looked very dark at Cambridge. He often consoled Gen. Schuyler from his own experience. On the 28th of July, he wrote to him: "It would be far beyond the compass of a letter for me to describe the situation of things here on my arrival. Confusion and discord reigned in every department; which, in a little time, must have ended either in the separation of the army, or fatal contests with one another. We mend every day; and I flatter myself, that, in a little time, we shall work up these raw materials into a good manufacture. I must recommend to you what I endeavor to practise myself, — patience and perseverance." Schuyler answered: "Yes, my general, I will strive to copy your bright example, and patiently and steadily persevere in that line which only can promise the wished-for reformation."

Gen. Washington became very desirous of doing something active at Boston. His small stock of powder prevented the use of cannon, which the

British were well supplied with ; but he proposed to his officers an attack on the town, the troops to be carried over in boats. In a letter written at this time, he says : " Unless the ministerial* troops in Boston are waiting for reinforcements, I cannot devise what they are staying there for ; nor why, as they affect to despise the Americans, they do not come forth, and put an end to the contest at once."

There were no less than four English generals in Boston. Gen. Gage, the chief, who had been Governor of Massachusetts, but who was recalled the next month ; Gen. Howe, a very popular commander ; Sir Henry Clinton ; and Gen. Burgoyne, who had distinguished himself in Portugal. The officers amused themselves as well as they could in the little besieged city ; but, for want of fresh provisions, the distress was beginning to be great. The officers of the Continental army were all of opinion that an attack on Boston at that time (September) was unwise ; and the Commander-in-chief gave up the idea, though inaction was exceedingly disagreeable to him.

* This word was used because people did not like to admit that they were the *king's* troops. They blamed the *ministers* of England for all the difficulties.

In October of this year, great indignation was roused throughout New England by the burning of Falmouth (now Portland), in Maine. British ships appeared in the harbor suddenly, and the inhabitants had only one night to remove themselves and property. They then refused the conditions on which the British lieutenant offered to spare the town, and saw it burnt to ashes. Such a fate was dreaded for all the seaport towns; but, happily, most of them escaped. Washington was very indignant at such cruelty, and heartily pitied the sufferings of the people, who lost almost their all in a single day. Gen. Greene, expressing in a letter the vehement feelings which such an act excites against those who order it, says: "People begin heartily to wish a declaration of independence."

In October, a committee from Congress came to camp to arrange matters in relation to a new army. Most of the soldiers had enlisted* only until December; and it would then be necessary to collect another force, as there was little prospect of any change on the part of the British. It was much easier for Gen. Washington to talk with a few gen-

* To enlist is to engage to serve in an army as a common soldier.

tlements in camp, than to write all his arrangements and intentions to the President of Congress. Another attack on Boston was proposed, as it was hinted that Congress desired it; but the generals still thought it imprudent.

After the committee went back, Washington's private secretary, Mr. Joseph Reed, returned to Philadelphia. This was a great loss to the General, as Mr. Reed's assistance in his enormous correspondence was very valuable, and a warm friendship had been formed between them.

Congress now voted that an army of twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-two men and officers should be raised for one year; but it was one thing to vote, and quite another actually to collect the men. The troops already in service—who, it was hoped, would cheerfully enlist again—dreaded the hardships of the coming winter, and made many conditions as to the officers they would serve under. The men of each Colony wanted officers from the same.

The officers, too, were very slow in coming forward. The first enthusiasm was over. Men saw what war really was, and began to think of consequences, of the support of their families, and of

their own condition when the war should be over. The New-England people, too, were accustomed to trade, and the soldier's "sentiment of honor" was not a common motive among them. For all these reasons, it was natural enough that enlistment should go on slowly; but the fact was a very discouraging one to Gen. Washington. In a letter to Mr. Reed, he says: "What will be the end of these manœuvres is beyond my scan. I tremble at the prospect. We have been till this time (Nov. 28) enlisting about three thousand five hundred men. . . . Could I have foreseen what I have experienced, and am likely to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept this command."

On the 1st of December, the Connecticut troops left the camp, in spite of an agreement to stay till the 10th; when the militia were ordered to take their places. Their conduct was known; and, when they arrived at home, they were so treated, especially by the women, that many of them were soon disposed to return to camp, with all its hardships.

The day after their departure, a more cheering event happened. A large quantity of cannon, muskets, and shot was brought to camp from a small

vessel fitted out under Washington's orders. At this time, he had not only the affairs of the army to control, but the management of several little vessels, which were prepared to annoy the British ships, and to defend the seaports.

Gen. Putnam was engaged in his favorite work of fortifying. He had christened the largest gun of the late capture the "Congress," and was impatient to get powder that he might use it. One of the officers, writing of the unusual mildness of the winter, says: "Everything thaws here, except 'old Put.' He is still as hard as ever, crying out for powder, powder, powder! Ye gods, give us powder!"

In December, Mrs. Washington arrived at camp. When Gen. Washington first took command, he had supposed that he could at least visit Mount Vernon in the autumn; but, as this was out of the question, his wife came to him. The estate was managed by Mr. Lund Washington, an agent, and probably a very distant relation, with whom the General always kept up a constant correspondence. At this time, he gave him the following directions about Mount Vernon: "Let the hospitality of the house, with respect to the poor, be kept up. Let no one go hungry away. If any of this kind of people should be in want of

corn, supply their necessities, provided it does not encourage them to idleness ; and I have no objection to your giving my money in charity, to the amount of forty or fifty pounds a year, when you think it well bestowed. What I mean by having no objection is, that it is my desire it should be done. You are to consider that neither my wife nor myself is now in the way to do those good offices. In other respects, I recommend it to you, and have no doubt of your observing the greatest economy and frugality ; as I suppose you know that I do not get a farthing for my services here more than my expenses. It becomes necessary, therefore, for me to be saving at home.”

Mrs. Washington was able to assist the General very much about home-matters in camp. Invitations to dine at his table were highly valued by members of the Massachusetts General Court, and other gentlemen of distinction, as well as by the officers. He had intended to invite a certain number every day ; but, being so constantly occupied with many cares and anxieties, all such small things were of necessity left to his aids. He himself, during the summer, would sometimes dine on baked apples or berries, with cream or milk, and quit the table, leaving an

officer in his place. Mr. Reed understood all such arrangements ; but, after he was gone, the aids had not managed so well, and some persons had been offended by what they considered neglect. Gen. Washington, on being told of this, said that he was very sorry, but that it was "owing to inattention, or, more properly, too much attention to other matters."

Mrs. Washington's graceful and dignified manners made the little society much pleasanter than it had been before ; but the General was too thoughtful to have a gay house. With some difficulty, Mrs. Washington prevailed upon him to allow her to celebrate Twelfth Night, the anniversary of their wedding.

They had always morning and evening prayers at head-quarters, and Gen. Washington went regularly to the Episcopal church.

There is one story told of him in Cambridge, which shows his presence of mind, and power of commanding other people. A party of Virginia riflemen, just arrived, were one day strolling about the College buildings, which were turned into barracks ;* and they got into a half-joking quarrel with

* Houses built for and occupied by soldiers and their families.

some Marblehead fishermen. They began to dispute about their dress; for the Virginians wore hunting-shirts, and the sailors round jackets. From words they came to throwing snowballs, and from snowballs to blows. There was a tumult in the camp, when suddenly "Washington appeared. None of his aids were with him; but his black servant was just behind him, mounted. He threw the bridle of his own horse into his servant's hands, sprang from his seat, rushed into the thickest of the *melée*,† seized two tall, brawny riflemen by the throat, keeping them at arms' length, talking to and shaking them. The men dispersed in every direction; and, in less than three minutes, all had left the ground, except the two he had collared."

If there was one thing which particularly roused Washington's indignation, it was a dispute between men from different Colonies. It was the desire of his soul that all the soldiers should be *Americans*, united in their end, and in the means they used to gain it.

December was a time of hard trial to Washington. The army seemed melting away; troop after

* A tumult; an excited crowd.

troop went home. It was not strange : they had suffered much, and thought it was time other men should take their turn. Militia generally came in to fill the empty places ; but they were troublesome, and not to be depended on. Gen. Greene was very cheerful through all these difficulties, and always assured the Commander-in-chief that the army would be filled up.

On the 4th of January, 1776, Gen. Washington wrote to his friend Reed : " Search the volumes of history through, and I much question whether a case similar to ours is to be found ; namely, to maintain a post against the power of the British troops for six months together, without powder, and then to have one army disbanded and another to be raised within the same distance (musket-shot) of a reinforced enemy. I wish this month were well over our heads. How it will end, God in his great goodness will direct. I am thankful for his protection to this time." And again : " The reflection on my situation and that of this army produces me many an unhappy hour when all around me are wrapped in sleep. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting the command under such circumstances,

I had taken my musket on my shoulder, and entered the ranks.”

In the month of January, 1776, there was a great stir in Boston Harbor. Vessels put to sea, and Gen. Washington thought they were bound for New York. That city was very important, on account of its size, and its connection with Canada by way of the Hudson River and Lake Champlain. Gen. Lee was therefore despatched to raise troops in Connecticut, and to fortify New York and the posts on the river. He was also to seize on some of the principal Tories in the city: but, in any business of that sort, Washington was obliged to give him most precise directions; for Lee was altogether the soldier in his ideas, and had no respect for law or Congress, or the feelings of men of peace. In this he was quite unlike Gen. Washington, who was careful to obey the laws of the land, and sincerely pitied the distresses of those who were not soldiers, though living in a time of war.

January dragged on wearily before Boston. A little firing was sometimes exchanged; and, one night, a small party of Continentals made a successful attack on a guard-house at Charlestown while most of the British officers were at the theatre,

seeing a piece called "The Blockade of Boston." The play was meant for a quiz on the Americans ; but perhaps they had the best of the joke.

Gen. Washington, besides feeling impatient himself for an attack on Boston, was worried by the general expectation that something would be done. He wrote to Mr. Reed on the 10th of February: "I know the unhappy predicament I stand in ; I know that much is expected of me ; I know, that, without men, without arms, without ammunition,* without anything fit for the accommodation of a soldier, little is to be done ; and, what is mortifying, I know that I cannot stand justified to the world without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause, by declaring my wants ; which *I am determined not to do*, further than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them. . . . In short, my situation has been such, that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers."

Do you see how he sacrificed his own reputation to "the cause"? He let people think him a poor officer, or over-cautious, or anything else they pleased, rather than injure his country by telling his

* Powder and shot, and all sorts of guns and cannon.

real condition. Do not you think he must have wanted to distinguish himself by some great action, — that he would like to have shown those British officers in Boston that he had the same energy now as on the day of the Monongahela? But he would not waste the lives of his men in an unsuccessful attempt; and again he yielded his own judgment to that of his officers, who, for the third time, pronounced an attack too unsafe. “Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city.”

At last, powder arrived at camp, brought by Col. Knox from Ticonderoga, in the depth of winter, over snow and ice. Knox was a bookseller in Boston; but he took great interest in military matters, was an ardent patriot, and soon became a distinguished artillery-officer. This exploit of his gratified Gen. Washington extremely, and showed him another brave, efficient man on whom he could rely.

On the 4th of March, a party of Americans got possession of Dorchester Heights* while the British were occupied with a cannonade on the north side of the city. They marched during the night, and immediately began to fortify. The next morning,

* Now a part of South Boston.

when Gen. Howe saw them, he exclaimed, "The rebels have done more work in one night than my army would have done in one month!" He was a little puzzled as to what he should do. He could not remain in the town with "the rebels" firing on him from the north and the south too; but he was by no means ready to leave Boston, as he had been writing home that he "hoped they would attack him." He decided that he must dislodge them from Dorchester Heights by an assault at night. The Americans were ready for him. Gen. Washington had been on the Heights all night. As he rode about, speaking to the men, they answered him with shouts. A great battle was expected; and, when the British had marched out on the south side of the town, Gen. Putnam was prepared to descend upon the north end.

In the evening, as the British began to move, a violent storm came on, which lasted all the next day. At the end of that time, the Americans had made their works so strong, that Gen. Howe thought it unwise to attack them. Their guns put the ships in the harbor in great danger; and, in a council of officers, it was decided that the British army must leave the place as soon as possible.

On the night of the 9th, another cannonade distressed the people of Boston. In the course of it, Gen. Putnam's gun, the "Congress," burst.

The preparations for departure were greatly hurried, and Boston became a scene of terrible confusion. Some things were destroyed to prevent their falling into the hands of the Americans. "The medicines, surgeon's chest, instruments, and necessaries were left in the hospital." Many Tories were eager to escape from their countrymen; and, at last, seventy-eight vessels carried off eleven or twelve thousand persons.

During this disturbance, the Americans looked down in silence from Dorchester Heights. Some of Putnam's troops joyfully took possession of Bunker's Hill the very morning that the British sailed, and the General entered the city the same day.

The next day (the 18th of March), the Commander-in-chief was gladly welcomed by the Bostonians; but he found the city in a sad state of disorder. Between the cannonade and the flight, it looked half ruined. The small-pox still prevailed in parts of the town, and the main body of the army did not enter it until the 20th.

The siege was over; Washington had won the

applause of the whole country for his wisdom and perseverance, and for the skill "by which, in the course of a few months, an undisciplined band of husbandmen became soldiers." Mr. John Adams proposed a vote of thanks to him from Congress: and a gold medal was ordered, having on one side a head of Washington; and, on the other, a view of Boston. The inscription tells what he did for the city.

Washington now supposed that the British fleet had sailed for New York. He therefore sent on his troops as fast as possible, and followed them himself on the 13th of April. It was but exchanging one scene of anxiety for another. New York was the largest city in the country. Many military stores were collected there, and it was very desirable to guard the Hudson River. Gen. Lee had begun to protect the city, and Gen. Putnam had continued the work. Washington urged it on with great vigor; for he felt that the enemy's ships might appear in the harbor at any moment, and he depended greatly on fortifications. His army was only eight thousand strong; and the men fit for duty were new recruits,* and destitute of arms.

* Men who have just joined an army.

This was also the darkest time of the Canada expedition ; and, while Washington was hardly pressed to maintain his own ground, Congress frequently suggested his sending more men to the aid of the generals at the North. He despatched ten regiments.

The greatest difficulty of all was, news came from Canada very slowly ; and it was very difficult to learn anything from England. Gen. Washington was anxious to know the enemy's plan for the campaign, that he might arrange his own accordingly. In New York, too, he was surrounded by Tories ; and the proper method of treating them cost him no little thought and anxiety.

“Head-quarters was a scene of incessant toil on the part of the Commander-in-chief, his secretaries and aides-de-camp.” “I give in to no kind of amusements myself,” writes he, “and consequently those about me can have none, but are confined from morning till evening, hearing and answering applications and letters.” Yet this very sentence is taken from a recommendation to Congress that his aids should have higher salaries ; and no one can read Gen. Washington's letters without wondering how he could manage, in the midst of such

heavy cares, to remember the private affairs of his friends and many other people.

He spent a few days in Philadelphia in May, to give information to Congress,* and to arrange plans. He urged that soldiers should be enlisted for a longer time, stating the many disadvantages of constantly forming and breaking up armies, and the bad policy of frequently calling out the militia in what promised to be a long war. During this visit, also, a better arrangement was made for despatching business between the Commander-in-chief and Congress. There had been great delays up to this time.

Soon after Washington's return to New York, a plot was discovered among the Tories. Gen. Washington was to have been seized, and either killed or delivered to the enemy. Gov. Tryon was supposed to be at the bottom of it: he was ready to provide arms for all who would join the enemy in an attempt to cut off all intercourse between the city and the country. The plan came to nothing; but it made every one suspicious. Some sort

* Gen. Lee wrote to him: "I am extremely glad that you are in Philadelphia, dear General; for their counsels sometimes lack a little of military electricity."

of conspiracy had spread far into the country, and no man knew whether his neighbor was a half or a whole Tory. The alarm and uncertainty increased the great excitement of the New-Yorkers. The mayor of the city was arrested, and a soldier of Gen. Washington's body-guard was executed.

British ships arrived in the harbor, and began to land troops on Staten Island. But while danger thus threatened the city, all hearts were cheered by the Declaration of Independence made by Congress on the 4th of July, 1776.* This paper only told in words what had been shown by deeds for some time, — that the Americans would no longer submit to the King of England. Gen. Washington was not surprised by it; he had for several months wished it; and believed the effect of the Declaration would be good on other nations, and that it would make "the cause" more animating to his own soldiers. "The General hopes and trusts," he says in one of his orders, "that every officer and man will endeavor so to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country."

* This is the reason of our national holiday.

Two of the ships pushed up the river, alarming the country people for the safety of two forts on its banks; and they turned out with the greatest spirit, leaving their harvests in the field. But their excitement was small compared with that of the city when the British admiral, Lord Howe, arrived. He came hoping to reconcile America and England; but he had no power to yield anything on the part of the British government. All that his addresses promised was pardon to those who would return to their allegiance to the crown. He was vexed to find that he came too late; but persisted in sending on shore a letter addressed to "George Washington, Esq." Col. Reed, Washington's friend, who was again with the army, answered that he knew no such person in the camp, and firmly declined receiving the letter. It was then proposed that a certain Col. Patterson should be allowed to have an interview with Gen. Washington. This was agreed to; and the Commander-in-chief received him at headquarters, with his officers and guards about him, in ceremonious style. Col. Patterson spoke to him as "your Excellency"; said that Lord Howe did not intend any disrespect; and showed a letter addressed to "George Washington, &c., &c."; hoping

that the and-so-forths, "as they implied everything," would satisfy all ideas of propriety.

Gen. Washington answered, that it was "true that they implied everything, but they also implied *anything*," and that he should absolutely refuse to receive any letter sent to him in his public station which did not give him his proper title. Gen. Howe said of this interview, that it was "more polite than interesting"; but he altered the direction of his letters in future. He and Gen. Washington had occasion to write to each other about the exchange of prisoners, which is done according to rank: a general is exchanged for a general, a colonel for a colonel, and a private for a private.

The ships in the Hudson continued to cause great alarm; but the militia were fortunately under the able command of Gen. George Clinton, a watchful and active officer. Gen. Putnam was busy in sinking some vessels fastened together with logs, which he flattered himself would prevent any more ships from passing up. Washington had not much confidence in the old general's being able to stop up the passage; and he gave his own attention to strengthening the works both about the city itself and on the banks of the Hudson. The event proved the

wisdom of his judgment. "Old Put's" labor was wasted.

Some plans were formed for attacking the troops landing on Staten Island, but they were not carried out; and ship after ship disembarked Hessians* and British, until the slopes of the island were white with tents. Their numbers amounted to about thirty thousand men, well armed, well drilled, and well supplied. Sir Henry Clinton, who had been defeated in an attack on Charleston, S. C., Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Dunmore (the late Governor of Virginia), were all with Gen. Howe. His brother, Lord Howe, was the admiral of the fleet. To all this force Gen. Washington could oppose only an army of little more than seventeen thousand men, — raw soldiers, many of them militia just called from their homes, without tents, and without almost everything that is needed in a camp.

But the enemy's great advantage was in the fleet. They could send ships up the East and Hudson Rivers, or easily land at some distant point while the Americans were making a toilsome march to meet them.

* German soldiers hired by the British government.

For many days, Washington was in a state of complete suspense. Not knowing where an attack might be begun, he tried to be watchful at all points. The citizens of New York were in a most excited state. They feared the town would either be cannonaded by the British, or burnt by the Americans. The Tories despised the American army. The Whigs dreaded falling into the enemy's hands. Women and children came to head-quarters, and beset the General in his walks, begging for protection. He pitied their sufferings, and did all in his power to relieve them by getting them removed from the city.

Quarrels among his men also both provoked and distressed the Commander-in-chief. One strife, indeed, the events soon following caused to be remembered. There were some gay troops from Delaware and Maryland, distinguished for their bravery, their drill, and their dress: in short, they were the dandies of the American army,—lively, and free of speech. They specially laughed at a company of horsemen from Connecticut,—farmers in homespun suits, armed with duck-guns, or any other weapon they could lay hands on, and riding on their farm-horses, which the gay “macaro-

nis"* called "sorry jades." Cavalry† was not very useful within the city. The men, however, refused to act as foot-soldiers; and Gen. Washington, afraid of discontenting the rest of the army if he indulged them, dismissed them. They went home, carrying with them unpleasant reports of the army, and complaints of the General.

Washington, in his general orders, most earnestly warned both officers and men against cherishing this spirit of attachment to their own State only. In one order, he says: "Let all distinction of nations, countries, and provinces be lost in the generous contest who shall behave with the most courage against the enemy, and the most kindness and good-humor to each other.

See what a patriot Washington was! He fought not for Virginia only, not that he himself might be free, but for all the States, for all his countrymen, and for us, their children's children. Other people might have their narrow, selfish aims; but the love of his *whole country* was pure and warm in Washington's heart. He was careful, also, to keep up and strengthen the moral character of his troops. For

* A name used at that time to mean a dandy, a beau.

† Soldiers who fight on horseback.

this purpose, he excused them from certain kinds of work on Sundays, that they might go to church; and adds: "The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing—a vice heretofore little known in an American army—is growing into fashion. It is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it."

At last, towards the end of August, the enemy began to land on Long Island. Hessian and British regiments were plainly seen, the noise of cannon was occasionally heard, and puffs of smoke curled up over the thick woods. The British, however, were very leisurely in their movements; and, for some time, Washington could not decide whether they would attack the works on Long Island while the ships sailed up to the city, or would combine their forces on one enterprise. Gen. Greene commanded the troops on Long Island, distant about a mile from the village of Brooklyn; but, unfortunately, his severe illness made it necessary to send over Gen. Putnam almost at the last moment. This was a great disadvantage, as he could not make himself familiar with the ground.

On the night of the 26th of August, the British marched from their landing-place ; and, at daybreak the next morning, the battle of Long Island began. The attacking army marched in three divisions ; and the Americans had unhappily left an unguarded road, by which one body was enabled to come up and surround those Americans who were engaged with another division of the enemy. The American generals did not penetrate at all the British plan : they therefore sent out what they considered a sufficient force to meet *two* attacks ; but, when the poor fellows attempted to retreat to the lines, a third supply of fresh British troops cut them to pieces. The young Americans fought bravely, and even desperately ; but the Hessians showed no mercy, and despatched them with the bayonet when they were too near for firing.

This was hardly a regular battle ; for the three British generals attacked in different places, and then waited until they could join each other successfully ; so that there were long pauses in the fighting.

At dawn, the roar of cannon had aroused the city of New York. As soon as Gen. Washington found that the wind was against the ships, and that there would be no attempt on the city, he hurried over to

the scene of action. Taking his station on a high hill, his telescope soon showed him the mistakes of his officers, and their ignorance of the enemy's numbers. The ground was so wooded, that the plan of attack could not be perceived by any one fighting. It was too late to change the orders. He could only watch the defeat; and, when the gallant Marylanders were shut in between two British columns, Washington wrung his hands in agony at the sight. "Good God!" cried he, "what brave fellows I must this day lose?" As soon as those who accomplished their retreat were within the lines, Washington prepared for an immediate assault from the enemy; but the British commander preferred to spare life, and trust to time for giving him the place.

Among the various causes of this day's defeat were the enemy's greater numbers; the illness of Gen. Greene; the long uncertainty in which the Commander-in-chief was kept; and, last and chiefly, that unguarded road. The despised Connecticut horsemen might have scoured the country, and brought such news of the enemy's motions as would have saved the lives of the brave Southerners who laughed at them.

The night after the battle was a dismal one. The

wounded suffered, as they always must at such times. There were few tents; and the weary, dispirited troops must watch, and be prepared; for their strong enemy was not a mile off. Washington went the rounds at four o'clock in the morning, to see that all was right, and to cheer the men, though anxious enough himself.

The next day no attack was made, and fresh American troops arrived from the upper end of Manhattan Island; but, during the morning, the motions of the ships were so alarming, that, lest the army should be surrounded, Washington, with his council of officers, decided to take his troops back to New York that very night.

Imagine how many boats would be needed to carry over nine thousand men, heavy guns, horses, provisions, powder and shot, and all the necessities of an army. Then, too, all orders must be given secretly; and there must not be noise enough to alarm the enemy, who were within hearing. The soldiers were only told to be ready for a night attack; which seemed strange to them, tired as they were, and with their guns wet with fog and rain.

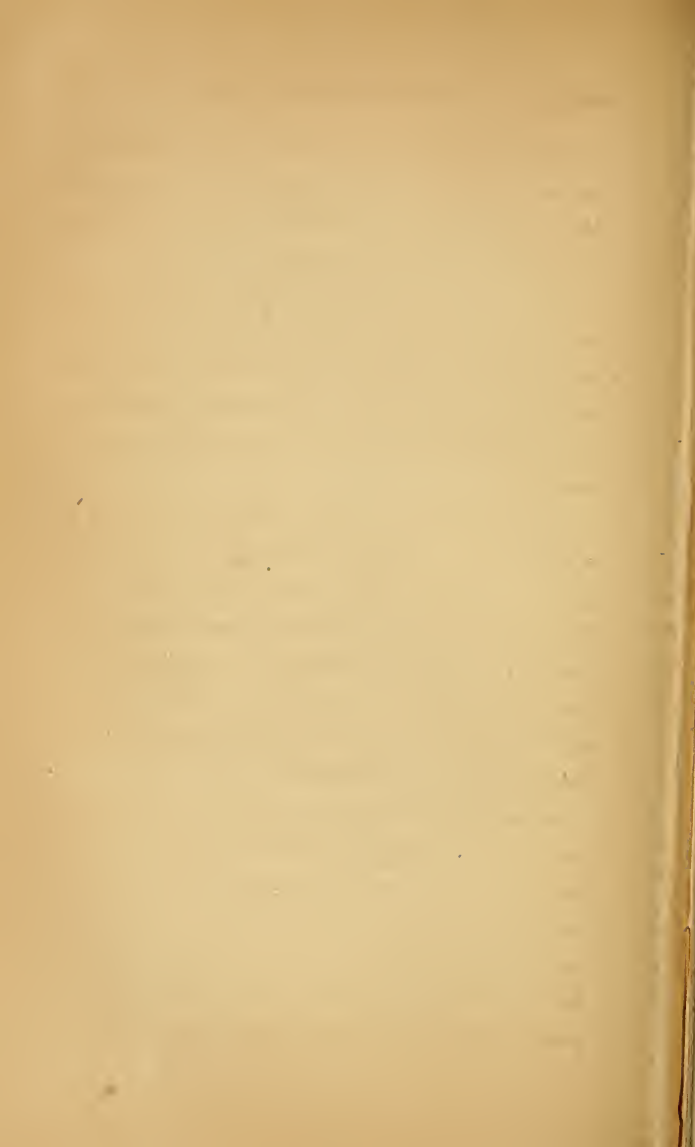
In the evening, the retreat began. Gen. Washington went directly to the ferry, and there super-

intended all the embarkation. In the dead of night, while the Americans were moving as silently as possible, a cannon went off with a tremendous roar ! The Americans could not stop to ascertain the cause ; but it did not disturb the British. Fortunately, there was a thick fog, so that the enemy could not see what was going on ; and Gen. Mifflin was left with a few troops to keep guard and station sentinels, just as if the army were within the lines. An aid brought him Washington's order to call in his men, and join him at the landing. It was a blunder on the part of the aid. There was some confusion at the ferry in getting off those troops which had already arrived there ; and Washington saw, with horror, Gen. Mifflin and his men appear too soon. He hastily explained to Mifflin that it was a mistake, and that they must turn back, for fear of ruining the whole plan.

That handful of men did turn back, at the risk of meeting the enemy, when they must have been destroyed. How unwillingly they must have left their fellow-soldiers on the shore ! They found the works still empty, took their places again, and waited till they were sent for. When, at last, they crossed, their Commander-in-chief followed them.



At Long Island the troops embarking in a fog.



Very few valuables were lost in this remarkable retreat. The boats were managed by a regiment of Marblehead fishermen, who thus had an opportunity of working at their own trade.

Few events in the war gave Gen. Washington more reputation than this silent, swift removal of his men from the very sight of the enemy, who, being informed of their departure by the servant of a Tory woman, entered the works the next morning.

In a letter of the 31st of August, apologizing for a slight delay in writing, Washington speaks of the fatigue of himself and family (his aids): "For forty-eight hours preceding the passage, I had hardly been off my horse, and never closed my eyes, so that I was quite unfit to write or dictate." He had all the fatigue of a private, and the anxiety of mind that belongs to a commander.

After the return to New York, the British ships came closer to the city than they had ever done before; but the army contented themselves with taking possession of the works built by the Americans on Long Island. The truth was, that Lord Howe sincerely wished to make peace. For this purpose he sent to Congress, requesting an interview

with some of the members. Three gentlemen met his Lordship at Staten Island, but nothing came of it. He had no new powers from his government, and could not promise any change of policy towards America.

Meantime, Washington's troops were dispersing. The militia and volunteers went home; and, what was perhaps worse, they took their guns and powder with them. Officers and men were alike dispirited by the defeat on Long Island; and Washington wrote, on the 2d of September, "With the deepest concern, I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops."

Now a doubt arose as to the possibility of defending New York. The men-of-war passed freely up both the Hudson and East Rivers; and, after much deliberation with his officers, the Commander-in-chief finally gave the order to remove the sick and the stores, and divide the army, while Gen. Putnam remained in the city to keep up appearances. Gen. Washington had made up his mind that this must be "a war of posts"; that he must avoid battles, and endeavor to wear away the enemy's strength by slow degrees, never attacking unless he had great advantages. "With these views," he wrote,

“and being fully persuaded that it would be presumption to draw out our young troops into open ground against their superiors both in numbers and discipline, I have never spared the spade* and pick-axe.”

An incident that occurred during the removal increased Gen. Washington's dislike to militia. The British began to land from boats between Turtle and Kip's Bays; and some militia, who guarded the breastworks at that place, immediately took to flight. Some regulars† joined them in their panic, when Washington galloped up to the scene of confusion. He endeavored to form them in vain. He snapped his pistols at them; threatened them with his own sword; and, when he saw them still running, he dashed his hat on the ground, and exclaimed, “Are these the men with whom I am to defend America?” His indignation completely broke down his remarkable composure of manner; but he soon recovered it, and decided to change his plans.

Gen. Putnam was ordered to leave the city of New York. There was too great a risk that some

* For digging earth to make fortifications.

† Soldiers who belong to an army.

party of the British might land between him and the rest of the army, and cut him off entirely. He succeeded in getting all his troops out; but some cannon and other stores, which the Americans could ill afford to lose, fell into the enemy's hands in consequence of the cowardly behavior of the militia.

The next morning, however, a skirmish took place, in which American courage showed itself the same as on Bunker's Hill. The spirits of the men revived; they saw that the "red-coats" were no better than themselves; and, in his orders, the Commander-in-chief took care to praise all who distinguished themselves.

In the midst of all this uncertainty, hurry, false reports, and real alarms, Gen. Washington began to think of what was to be done for the future. The year for which the army had enlisted at Cambridge was nearly ended. Where would new soldiers and new officers come from? Must he again take soldiers from the plough, or the workshop, and again see them return home just when they were beginning to be trustworthy and useful? During the "hours allotted to sleep," he wrote a long letter to Congress, describing the condition of the army; the need of trained men, and of good, carefully appointed

officers; the trouble and expense of calling out militia to serve for a few weeks at a time, and the confusion they caused in camp because they could not and would not be subjected to the same discipline as regular soldiers. He spoke of all these and other evils in simple, strong language. He knew just what they were; for he had suffered from them. He pointed out the remedies; and he expressed in a few words his own feelings of mortification and disappointment at not being able to do what he considered the work of an army, and satisfy the expectations of Congress and the country. This letter, added to Washington's former writings, produced an effect on Congress; it was voted that the next army should be raised *for the war*. But there was a vast amount of thinking and writing to be accomplished before all the arrangements could be made. Washington served his country as much with his pen as with his sword. He was obliged to suggest to Congress what ought to be done; while, in some things, he was under the orders of that body. Many of the members, too, had a great dread of the power of armies and generals; and feared that, when the British should be defeated, Washington would have an army devoted to him,

and would become the ruler of the United States. They had read of such things in history; and, though they had perhaps as much confidence in Gen. Washington as in any one, still power was a great temptation to mortals, and they held back from putting it into the hands of "any one man." This feeling may have been natural enough; but it was a terrible drawback in carrying on the war. For fear that he should conquer his own countrymen, the Commander-in-chief was many a time hard pressed for the means to conquer the enemy.

At this time, Gen. Washington could not imagine what the enemy were waiting for; and he was himself constantly riding about to the different parts of his camp. Gen. Greene had charge of the Jersey shore, and watched the fleets. Three more ships went up the Hudson, dashing through the obstructions as if they had been cobwebs. All was hurry and excitement; for those ships carried panic with them. No one knew what they were to do. Expresses flew to camp, and Washington wrote and sent hither and thither in all directions. Every one must be on the alert, and careful; for Tories abounded in the neighborhood of New York. The

militia mustered; but only skirmishes and plunderings took place.

On the 12th of October, the enemy landed at Throg's Neck, in the Sound. They were immediately checked by the Americans, who had possession of strong ground; but the next question was, whether the American army ought to remain on Manhattan Island, with the enemy in their rear. A council of officers — among whom was Gen. Lee, just returned from the South — decided that it must be removed to the main land; and, on the 23d of October, Gen. Washington established himself at White Plains, in a fortified camp. The ground was high and rocky, and the river Bronx ran along the foot of the ridge. For several days the Commander-in-chief had been riding about the country, choosing, in that rough, half-wild region, proper places for fortifications.

The day after the arrival of Gen. Lee, who brought over the rear of the army, Washington rode out with him and other general officers to reconnoitre.* As they were gently riding along

* A military term for examining either the face of the country or the arrangement of an enemy's army.

towards a hill Lee thought it would be well to fortify, a trooper galloped up to them, crying out, "The British are in the camp, Sir!" "Then, gentlemen," said Washington, "we have other business to attend to than reconnoitring." He set off for the camp at full gallop, the others following. Col. Reed told him, on his arrival, that the whole army was posted in order of battle. "Gentlemen," said Washington, turning calmly to his companions, "you will return to your respective posts, and do the best you can." He had just time to give a few important orders, when the enemy appeared in two brilliant columns, accompanied by light-horse,* which the Americans particularly feared. They paused, and did not attack the front of the lines, but turned to a hill a little on the right of the camp. The Americans made a brave defence, and the loss on both sides was about equal; but the enemy gained possession of the hill, and proceeded to fortify it. Washington did the same in his camp; and his works were made with great speed by pulling up stalks of Indian corn, with the earth

* Soldiers mounted on light, swift horses, dressed and armed as lightly as possible, and often rather small men.

clinging to their roots. He always aimed at giving his men something to fight behind, and the soldiers of the Revolution learned to use whatever came to hand.

The army were already suffering from the cold. A British officer wrote : "The rebel army are in so wretched a condition as to clothing and accoutrements,* that I believe no nation ever saw such a set of tatterdemalions. There are few coats among them but what are out at elbows ; and, in a whole regiment, there is scarce a pair of breeches. Judge, then, how they must be pinched by a winter's campaign. We, who are warmly clothed and well equipped, already feel it severely."

You must not imagine that any of these hardships were owing to Gen. Washington's neglect. It is not the business of a commander-in-chief to pay or clothe troops. Congress gave too small pay ; for the price of everything was raised by the war, and therefore the soldiers could not buy what they wanted ; and the separate States did not take sufficient pains to send supplies to their own men in camp.

* All the things a soldier carries or wears besides his clothes, such as his gun, sword, sword-belt, and knapsack.

It is always difficult to provide for an army, and Congress did not know how to get money. Also, men of peace, who live at home, often cannot understand all the wants of the soldier who sleeps on the side of a hill, after perhaps a day of digging trenches. Gen. Washington did everything in his power for the men, by his letters to Congress and the governors of the States.

On the night of the 31st of October, before any attack had been made on the camp, Gen. Washington withdrew his army to Northeastle, about five miles from White Plains, where he again fortified high, rocky ground. He was afraid the enemy might pass behind him, and he had no mind to be shut in between them and the sea. Gen. Howe made no attack, and, in a few days, took his whole force to the Hudson River. Where was he going? To the Jerseys? or to attack Fort Washington? — the only place on Manhattan Island where any Americans had been left. This was a strong fort, and Congress had particularly desired that it should be kept. It lay within Gen. Greene's command.

As soon as Washington thought it probable that this was the enemy's object, he divided his army; leaving Gen. Lee at Northeastle, in case of a return

of the British ; sending one body to guard the passes of the Highlands, and another to protect the Jersey shore.

Nothing could be more embarrassing than to try to cover so many places with so small an army. He himself crossed the Hudson to Fort Lee, in New York, opposite to Fort Washington. He and some of his officers had believed that the garrison of the latter place had better be withdrawn ; but Gen. Greene was sure that it could hold out. Washington had therefore forbore to give any order in his letters ; but he arrived in time to see the gallant defence, and at last the surrender of the fort. The British attacked it in four divisions, and the Americans resisted nobly. For some time, Washington watched them with strong hope ; but when, at last, he saw his men overpowered by numbers, and “ bayoneted by the Hessians while begging quarter,”* he was completely overcome, and tears blinded his eyes.

The loss to the Americans was heavy, not only in men, but in cannon and guns. Among the prisoners were some of the best-disciplined troops in the

* To give quarter is to spare men's lives.

army. It was a mortification, too, to the army, and to the Commander-in-chief, whose judgment had been against keeping the place. Gen. Lee wrote to him: "O General, why would you be over-persuaded by men of inferior judgment to your own?" This was aimed at Gen. Greene, Washington's friend. Lee was a man who would carry out his own design, no matter who might oppose him. He would never have respected the wishes of Congress, or the opinion of a person who was on the spot, as Gen. Greene had been. At this time, Gen. Lee was probably more confident than usual in his own judgment, because he had just been very successful at the South, and was extremely admired by the whole army. Even Washington's aids spoke of him with enthusiasm.

The Commander-in-chief needed no discouraging remarks from other people to depress him. His own letter to his brother, after giving an account of this disaster, and of the many evils which he had foretold the year before, and which had now come to pass, ends with these words: "I am wearied almost to death with the retrograde* motion of

* Backward.

things; and I solemnly protest, that a pecuniary reward of twenty thousand pounds a year would not induce me to undergo what I do, and, after all, perhaps to lose my character, as it is impossible, under such a variety of distressing circumstances to conduct matters agreeably to public expectation, or even to the expectation of those who employ me, as they will not make proper allowances for the difficulties their own errors have occasioned."

Now a dark time came for the army. It was necessary to make a hasty retreat from Fort Lee, on the west bank of the Hudson, opposite Fort Washington. Tents, baggage, artillery, and provisions were lost. On they went through the Jerseys, from Hackensack to Newark; thence to Brunswick, to Princeton, and to Trenton. It was a slow retreat; for, at each halt, Washington hoped to be re-enforced by militia at least: but they did not come, and Lord Cornwallis was pursuing him with a superior force. The people of the Jerseys were inclined to Toryism; and, besides, they naturally thought that a flourishing, well-equipped army would protect them better than a worn-out, retreating one: therefore they gave no help to the patriots.

Washington expected Gen. Gates from the North-

ern department; and sent *six letters*, besides expresses, to hasten Gen. Lee's march from North-castle. He wrote to the governor of New Jersey, and sent Gen. Mifflin to Congress for immediate aid. He spared no exertion of his pen, and no effort to keep his men with him; but all that he was able to accomplish was the securing the boats, so that the enemy were prevented from crossing the Delaware after he had stationed himself on the bank.

At the end of November, in the midst of all this public distress, Washington received a cruel blow from a friend whom he loved and trusted. Col. Reed was absent from camp for a few days, and the General opened and answered his business-letters. One day a letter for Col. Reed was brought to him from Gen. Lee, which was private, and anything but complimentary to the Commander-in-chief. He immediately perceived that Col. Reed must have written to Lee in somewhat the same strain; for this letter was evidently an answer. He enclosed it to Col. Reed without one word of reproach; merely explaining in his note that he had opened it supposing it to be a letter on public business.

Gen. Lee delayed joining Washington, because he had projects of his own which he thought would be very useful; and though the Commander-in-chief wrote in one letter, "Do come on, your arrival may be fortunate," Lee still moved slowly, and entirely according to his own judgment, without any regard to orders. At last, one day when he was lodging at a solitary farm-house, he was taken prisoner by a small party of the British. Washington forbore to blame his carelessness, and made every arrangement in his power to make his captivity comfortable.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for the Americans that this loss befell them. They had been dazzled by Gen. Lee's military talents; and now they had an opportunity to contrast his wilfulness and shortsighted judgment with the wisdom and patient forbearance of their true hero.

The British soon learned that there was energy in the American counsels without Lee. Washington wrote to his brother, Dec. 18, 1776: "If every nerve is not strained to recruit the army with all possible expedition, I think the game is pretty nearly up. . . . You can form no idea of the perplexity of my situation. No man, I believe, ever

had a greater choice of evils, and less means to extricate himself from them." He was not ready, however, to give up "the game" yet. Militia-men began to join him, and the banks of the Delaware were carefully guarded.

On the night of the 25th (Christmas night), Gen. Washington crossed the river to attack the Hessians at Trenton. It was so full of ice, that the Marblehead regiment found it very hard to manage the boats. After the crossing, the men marched nine miles through snow and hail, sometimes marking the whitened ground with blood from their shoeless feet. As they drew near Trenton, Washington, who rode in front, asked a man chopping wood by the roadside, "Which way is the Hessian picket"?* "I do not know," was the surly answer. "You may tell," said the officer at Washington's side; "for that is Gen. Washington." "God bless and prosper you!" cried the man instantly. "The picket is in that house, and the sentry stands near that tree."

The battle of Trenton was short indeed, compared with the march that had led to it. The enemy were surprised, scattered about the town, and

* A small guard stationed in front of an army.



Which Way is the Hessian picket?

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soon forced to surrender. During the firing, Gen. Washington was much exposed; but no entreaties could persuade him to fall back. Many prisoners were taken; and, had the whole of Washington's plan been accomplished, the two other generals, who were to have crossed at the same time, would have captured those Hessians who escaped from Trenton. Gen. Washington, not being joined as he expected, was in great danger from the enemy close at hand, and was obliged immediately to recross the Delaware with his tired troops and prisoners. The weather was so severe, that two men were frozen to death on Christmas night. Notwithstanding Washington's haste, he found time to visit the dying Hessian commander, Col. Rahl.

After a very short rest, Gen. Washington was anxious to follow up the affair of Trenton by another blow at the Hessians. They were so disturbed by his sudden attack, and by the movements of Colonels Reed, Cadwalader, and Griffin, nearer Philadelphia, that they had already begun to retreat. At this moment disciplined soldiers were absolutely necessary; and the Commander-in-chief promised ten dollars apiece to those who had been with him, if they would stay six weeks longer. He wrote to

Mr. Morris, a patriot of Philadelphia, to ask him to provide the money ; and, oddly enough, a Quaker, whose principles forbade fighting, supplied the needed sum. At this distressing time, too, Congress gave Washington power, for the next six months, to raise regiments, to appoint officers, and to do many other things, exactly as he should judge fit, without consulting them.

The ice in the Delaware caused such delay in the Americans' crossing, that Lord Cornwallis had time to return to Jersey with a strong force. — Gen. Washington was obliged to collect in one place all the troops which had been spread along the bank of the river ; and, even then, he was not in a state to offer battle.

On the night of the 2d of January, the two armies laid down in sight of each other's fires, expecting a severe conflict the next day. But Washington suddenly formed a better plan. He would not fight there with so many of the militia, nor would he retreat, for that would discourage them ; but he would attack a body of the enemy left at Princeton. He led his men over a rough, roundabout road, after leaving diggers and sentries within hearing of the British camp. At sunrise he reached Princeton.

Two British regiments, already on their march to join Lord Cornwallis, met the Americans; and the first division of the Continentals was retreating in some confusion, when Washington arrived at the scene of action. "Everything was at peril. Putting spurs to his horse, he dashed past the hesitating militia, waving his hat, and cheering them on. His commanding figure and white horse made him a conspicuous object for the enemy's marksmen; but he heeded it not."

The men rallied at the sound of his voice, and followed him. The action was short, but sharp. Washington, in the midst of it, was in danger from the random shot of his own men, as well as from that of the enemy. In the cloud of smoke and dust, one of his aids lost sight of him, and gave him up in despair. When, however, he reappeared, "Thank God!" cried the aid, "your Excellency is safe!" "Away, my dear Colonel, and bring up the troops! the day is our own!" answered Gen. Washington.

The Americans pursued the retreating British towards Brunswick, where stores were collected; but Washington restrained his ardor, considering the tired, sleepless, half-clad condition of his troops, and

the strength of the enemy in his rear. Lord Cornwallis had of course found out, that, for the third time in the course of a few months, Washington had silently stolen away in the night. He was afraid his stores were captured; and consoled himself for the loss at Princeton, when he found they were safe.

Gen. Washington at last came to a stand at Morristown; but he was fired with the idea of driving the enemy out of Jersey; and whenever he was not marching, he was forming plans and writing letters.

The people of the State were at last roused; and, though he had but a handful of regular soldiers, by means of militia he managed to waylay small parties of the enemy; to prevent their receiving supplies of provisions; and, in a word, to *worry* them continually. The positions of the two armies were so wonderfully reversed in little more than two weeks, that Cornwallis was obliged to ask Gen. Washington if a party carrying medicines and stores to the Hessian prisoners could pass safely through the country. Such a change not only proved the skill and energy of the General, but the resolution of a people whom it would be hard to conquer.

Morristown, which became the winter quarters of the army, was situated on high hills, easily defended. There all the troops were collected, except a small body stationed at Princeton, under Gen. Putnam, to harass and annoy the enemy.

The small-pox again broke out in the American army, and the sufferings from it were frightful. Hospitals were prepared by Washington's orders, and he went constantly to see and cheer the sick. In the pestilence, as on the battle-field, he shared with his men danger and despondency.

An officer, who had been in the two recent battles, wrote on the 7th of January: "Our army love their General very much; but they have one thing against him; which is, the little care he takes of himself in any action. His personal bravery, and the desire he has of animating his troops by example, make him fearless of danger. This occasions us much uneasiness. But Heaven, which has hitherto been his shield, I hope will continue to guard so valuable a life."

During this winter at Morristown, Gen. Washington was incessantly occupied. In the new army which was slowly forming, the old officers expected rank; and their rivalries, jealousies, and disappoint-

ments were endless. In some of these feelings the Commander-in-chief sympathized; for he did not think Congress always considerate or just in making appointments; and a man might be very popular with the members, and yet be a poor officer. There is always among officers a sensitiveness about rank; for which Congress did not make allowance, but Washington did. He would appeal to a man's patriotism not to leave his country's service at an important moment, and then write another letter to Congress urging his merits and his sacrifices. To think and to write for both parties formed no small part of Washington's work. A great many foreign officers, particularly Frenchmen, also applied for high rank in the American army. This was a great cause of trouble; for no native officer, who had served during the war, would be expected to obey a foreigner of the same rank; yet the knowledge and experience of the Europeans were often very desirable. Congress wished not to offend Frenchmen, as there were great hopes of an alliance* for the war with France.

One person presented himself, whose first words

* An alliance is a union between two nations.

pleased the Commander-in-chief. Kosciuszko, a Pole of high rank and education, brought him a letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin. "What do you seek here?" inquired Washington. "To fight for American independence." "What can you do?" "Try me." Washington admitted him into his family as an aid, and he proved himself a valuable engineer-officer.

During this winter and spring, several letters passed between Gen. Washington and Sir William Howe concerning the exchange of prisoners. The Americans in New York suffered such hardships, that Washington conceived it his duty to make a complaint. Sir William Howe sturdily denied any cruelty; but when, at last, the men came out in the spring, they were in such a feeble, dying condition, as confirmed all their reports. It is not likely that Sir William Howe knew how they were treated. He and his generals were uniformly kind to American officers; but he did not much concern himself about privates.

Congress, having an exaggerated idea of the severity of Gen. Lee's confinement, ordered retaliation upon the British and Hessian officers captured at Trenton and Princeton. Washington entirely dis-

agreed with them ; he thought such a measure both cruel and unwise ; but the enemy blamed him for what he had not power to prevent.

Beside these things, a great many smaller matters pressed upon the attention of the General ; but these are enough to give some idea of his cares. His force was at times scanty indeed. "The enemy," he wrote, "must be ignorant of our numbers and situation, or they would never suffer us to remain unmolested ; and I almost tax myself with imprudence in committing the fact to paper, for fear this letter should by any accident fall into other hands than those for which it is intended."

Sir William Howe was in no haste, however, to leave his comfortable quarters in New York ; and the plans for the coming campaign could only be guessed at. Both Gen. Gates and Gen. Schuyler pressed for supplies at the North, believing that an immediate attack on Ticonderoga was to be expected. Washington himself thought that Sir William Howe would advance to Philadelphia. To save that important city had been the object of his winter battles, and he was determined to dispute the possession of it still.

The forts on the Hudson River were to be looked

to most carefully. In May, five generals went to examine them and recommend improvements. The command on the river was given to Gen. Putnam. "You are well acquainted," wrote Washington to Gen. M'Dougall, "with the old gentleman's temper: he is active, disinterested, and open to conviction." "Old Put" began the work of obstructing the river with as much zeal as if he had not failed before. This time he stretched an iron chain across the Hudson at Fort Montgomery. To guard the river was particularly important this year (1777); because, if the British succeeded at Lake Champlain, they must be prevented from joining the army in New York.

Early in the spring, Sir William Howe sent out some expeditions to destroy the American stores. In one case the loss was particularly felt, as they burnt the tents intended for the army's summer use. But the people rose with spirit against the marauders, especially in Connecticut, where Gen. Benedict Arnold distinguished himself as usual; and, on the whole, such inroads were of no use to King George III. Col. Meigs, of the American army, was successful in an attack of the same sort on the enemy's stores.

In June, however, Sir William Howe came out from New York with his whole army, and, for about three weeks, manœuvred about in New Jersey, sometimes endeavoring to tempt Gen. Washington to a battle in *front* of his lines; sometimes trying to get behind, and enclose him. Now he marched forward; then he struck his tents, and retreated. It was necessary to be prepared for everything, and to guard Philadelphia. Before they came out, Washington had broken up his camp at Morristown, and stretched out his little army on the high, rugged hills. He was determined not to fight, and nothing took place but a little skirmishing. There was one great difference between this spring and the last autumn: the Jersey militia were ready to serve, and the people were decidedly hostile to the enemy. The chief reason was, that both British and Hessians had plundered the farmers; making enemies, instead of keeping friends. Washington, on the contrary, took the greatest pains to prevent his soldiers from plundering Tory houses.

While the army was in motion, and the General was most anxious, he received a letter from Gen. Reed, begging that the friendship which had been interrupted by Washington's having seen that unfor-

fortunate epistle of Gen. Lee's, might be restored to him. It was a most affectionate letter; and Washington instantly wrote back again in equally cordial terms, thanking Reed for having written, and saying that he had felt hurt, not because he thought his friend had blamed him, but because he had made criticisms to Gen. Lee, instead of speaking to himself openly of anything which he disapproved. Thus easily was Washington's forgiveness won, and his attachment to Mr. Reed lasted all his life. His letters during the past winter had been only upon business, and Gen. Reed had felt severely the change from his former intimate style.

A younger friend was about this time allowed to share the confidence of the Commander-in-chief. Alexander Hamilton, the captain of a New York company of artillery, had distinguished himself during the last campaign, and was now serving as an aide-de-camp. He was not more than twenty years old; but his mind was bright, and wonderfully mature; his manners were agreeable; and he was very useful at head-quarters. He was so small, and so full of spirit, that Col. Harrison, Washington's "old secretary," used to call him "the little lion," while the Commander-in-chief would sometimes say, "My

boy." This little lion afterwards did great things for the United States, and his name must never be forgotten.

On the last of June, Sir William Howe quitted New Jersey, and prepared to go on board his ships. Where was he going? To the Eastern States, or to Philadelphia? or up the Hudson, to join Gen. Burgoyne on his march to Ticonderoga? Every one was puzzled. The army must be divided; but how many important places were to be guarded!

Bad news came from Ticonderoga; and Gen. Schuyler asked for troops, which Washington dared not send him. His advice for the campaign, and his sympathy in all Schuyler's troubles, were always given, and always valued. Not till the 23d of July did the fleet leave New York Harbor. Washington then proceeded to Germantown, near Philadelphia; "casting his eyes continually behind him," as he said, to the Highlands of the Hudson.

One day, at a public dinner in Philadelphia, Washington first met Lafayette, a young French Marquis, who had left a young wife, and a luxurious home, to fight in the cause of freedom. He had had many adventures on his way, and Congress had

given him the rank of a major-general.* He distinguished Washington in the midst of his officers by his commanding air and person, and the Commander-in-chief immediately gave him a most cordial invitation to make head-quarters his home.

Lafayette wrote of his first sight of the American army, "Eleven thousand men, but tolerably armed, and still worse clad, presented a singular spectacle." The enthusiastic young nobleman was probably disappointed in the appearance of the patriots; but he had the good sense to conceal any such feeling. Washington said to him, "We ought to feel embarrassed in presenting ourselves before an officer just from the French army." "It is to learn, and not to instruct, that I come here," was the answer of the Marquis; and it made him immediately popular.

He had, indeed, arrived at a time of perplexity. The British fleet was seen far south of the Capes of the Delaware. Could it be going to Charleston? Should the army march thither at the hot season? Should it go back to New York and attack Sir Henry Clinton, or even try for a blow at Burgoyne?

* The third rank. The Commander-in-chief is the highest officer; next, Lieutenant-general; next, Major-general.

Opinions differed, and all was uncertainty ; until, at last, the fleet came up Chesapeake Bay, and Washington marched to Wilmington, in the State of Delaware.

The enemy landed near the Head of Elk in Maryland, where there were many valuable stores. Light parties were sent out to keep them back while these were removed. They were seventy miles from Philadelphia ; but the country was not patriotic, and Sir William Howe judged it the best way to advance to the city.

Washington now spent many days, on horseback, reconnoitring the country. He had made up his mind to risk a battle, though many of his men were militia, and others new recruits. There was a disposition in the country to criticise the motions of the army. Congress now spurred him on ; and his natural disposition, so often restrained, was for action. It would injure the cause to suffer Philadelphia to fall into the hands of the enemy without a blow. In his general orders of the 5th of September, he stated the case to the army. "Two years," continued he, "we have maintained the war, and struggled with difficulties innumerable ; but the prospect has brightened. Now is the time to reap the fruit of

all our toils and dangers. If we behave like men, this third campaign will be our last."

After some changes of position on both sides, the battle began on the 11th of September. Washington made his centre at Chad's Ford, on Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania, which was on the direct road to Philadelphia. Here an attack was made, without much vigor on the enemy's part; and the Americans began to think they might have an easy victory, when a message was brought that a body of the British had crossed the river above them, and were coming down on their right. The plan was quickly changed. Then the information was contradicted; but it proved true. Lord Cornwallis had marched seventeen miles to get round the Americans. When his heavy guns were heard, a sharp attack was made in front. For a time, the Americans fought well; but at last they gave way before superior numbers and discipline. As night closed in, all was uproar and confusion along the road to Chester, twelve miles distant, where Washington, Greene, and Lafayette (who was wounded) checked the flight, and took post for the night.

The Whigs of Philadelphia were terribly daunted at this result of the battle of the Brandywine. Many

of them fled from the city to the hills, and Congress moved to Yorktown. But the enemy, strangely enough, delayed near the field of battle two days ; thus giving Gen. Washington time to retreat towards Philadelphia, and make a few more arrangements for its defence. The army was in good spirits, so that he again marched towards Sir William Howe, with the intention of offering battle. A violent rain, however, prevented this, and left the guns and powder in such a state that retreat was necessary. During this retreat, some troops under Gen. Wayne were lost.

The vigorous, well-supplied British army was able to march and countermarch in a way for which Washington's ragged, shoeless soldiers were no match ; and after many harassing days, and a consultation to ascertain if it were possible to fight again, he was obliged to see the enemy, in long array, enter Philadelphia. He had reason to pride himself on having kept them out so long with his small, inexperienced force ; nor did he now despond. He hoped for good news from the North, and that he might be able to prevent Gen. Howe from getting supplies by land. There were two forts and several obstructions in the river Delaware, which were

expected to check the fleet; so that the enemy's situation in the city might not be a very desirable one.

They had also a camp at Germantown, which Gen. Washington determined to attack. After giving his troops a little rest, and receiving some re-enforcements, he chose the night of the 3d of October as a favorable opportunity, when he knew that the British force had been divided. Four roads met in Germantown; and along these roads the Americans advanced, Gen. Washington accompanying one of the divisions, and, as usual, exposing himself to the hottest fire. They came on with spirit; and fought well; when suddenly, just as the enemy wavered a little, they were seized with a panic, and began to fall back, no one knew why. Of course not all the four parties had been exactly punctual in meeting; and, while some were coming up, others were retreating, which caused great confusion. There was a thick fog, so that they could hardly tell friends from enemies; and panic always spreads among raw soldiers: none but well-disciplined veterans can resist it. The retreat, however, was accomplished without great loss; though it was excessively mortifying to the Commander-in-chief and his generals.

They had some good grounds for encouragement, even in the face of all these disasters. One was, that the soldiers were not dispirited; even in a defeat, they found out their own powers, and thought themselves more nearly equal to the enemy than before. Another good result was, that the British were much impressed with the boldness of this attack upon them. In France, also, it was considered a most remarkable thing to bring "an army raised within the year" to the point of giving battle to the British.

Washington now posted his army on strong ground near Philadelphia, and carefully guarded the roads. For active movements, he was obliged to wait till his force should be larger. Meantime news reached him of the loss of the forts on the Hudson. Sir Henry Clinton had been more than a match for Gen. Putnam, and had surprised Fort Montgomery. The Americans, however, had made a gallant defence. Fort Mercer, on the Delaware, was more successfully maintained against a detachment of Hessians. Gen. Washington deemed it a place of the utmost importance, and had put into it carefully chosen troops. Their courage proved them worthy of his trust; and, in these days of

defeat, every brave deed was gladly welcomed by the Commander-in-chief.

On the 17th of October of this year, Gen. Burgoyne, who had marched to the attack of Ticonderoga with a fine army, surrendered near Fishkill to Gen. Gates. This was, of course, a most important event to the Americans; and as the Commander-in-chief had made many plans for the campaign, which ended so triumphantly, and had watched the course of events with great interest, he ought to have been immediately informed of it by Gen. Gates. In any case, it would have been only a decent respect to a commander-in-chief. But Gen. Gates contented himself with writing to Congress, and Washington heard the news through others. Washington had already written to request that some regiments should be returned to him as quickly as possible; he now sent Col. Hamilton to hurry forward a large body.

The young officer did not find his mission by any means a pleasant one; for Gen. Gates, elated with his success, had already formed his own plans for employing the troops, and was hardly disposed to remember that there was a head for the *whole army*. "Old Put" also made many objections to parting

with his men in the Highlands, because he had set his heart on making a dash at the city of New York.

While these generals threw obstacles in Hamilton's way, Gen. Howe attacked Fort Mifflin, on an island in the Delaware. For four days, the defence was really splendid; but at last the enemy's heavy guns destroyed even the palisades. There was nothing left to fight for; and the heroic garrison, reduced to a very small number, crossed by night to Fort Mercer, illustrious for its former brave defence.

Sir William Howe, of course, proceeded to attack that place; and, before Washington's re-enforcements could reach it, the garrison, entirely outnumbered by the enemy, had abandoned the works, which were immediately destroyed.

Had the troops from the North arrived ten days earlier, the brave defenders of these two forts might have been assisted, the enemy would have been very uneasy in Philadelphia, and Washington's army would have closed the campaign cheerfully.

A little later, Gates's success and Washington's disasters were often contrasted; but who was to blame? In the spring, Gen. Washington and Gen. Schuyler had thought of many things which helped

to bring about Gen. Gates's triumph; and, in the autumn, he delayed giving the aid so sadly needed by the Southern army. The New York and New England militia flocked to his camp; while, in Southern Pennsylvania, Washington, far from obtaining recruits, could not even get information of the enemy's movements. In addition to all this, Congress, in the middle of the campaign, changed the plan for supplying the army with clothes and food. The consequence was, that the soldiers suffered severely for want of blankets and shoes. Gen. Washington was actually obliged to give up a march against Sir William Howe because so many of his men were barefoot.

But all such troubles were scrupulously kept secret, lest the enemy should hear of them; and Washington was often blamed for not fighting when he had no men, or for not marching when his troops were worn out with weary days and watchful nights, — blamed, too, by men who had never seen an army or read a military book.

In December of this year, the dissatisfaction of some members of Congress and of certain officers came to Gen. Washington's knowledge in a most unpleasant manner. A friend of his informed him

that a letter from Gen. Conway, a foreigner, to Gen. Gates, contained expressions most disrespectful to him, and highly improper to be passing between officers under his command. By a short note to Conway, Washington immediately let all the plotters know that he was aware of their designs. Gen. Mifflin was extremely prominent among the discontented. Their *exact* intentions are not known now; but there is every reason to believe that they wished to deprive Washington of his office of Commander-in-chief, and to put Gen. Gates in his place.

"The cabal," as they were called, wrote long letters defending themselves from any charge of unfaithfulness; and the correspondence on this subject between Washington, his friends and his enemies, lasted for several months. His letters are noble and dignified; though they sometimes express the pain which attacks on his character gave him, and sometimes show his warm indignation against those whom he looked upon as enemies to his and their country. Gen. Gates plays but a small part in the matter: his vanity, probably, was the cause of his engaging in such a scheme; and his letters are weak.

But, though this affair added a shade of gloom

to the darkest time of the war,—the winter of 1777–78, — it must not be thought that Washington's friends failed him. From many Americans he received most affectionate, sympathizing letters; and Lafayette was true as steel. Both in public and in private, he took every opportunity to show his admiration for the Commander-in-chief.

In answer to a letter from Mr. Laurens, President of Congress, Washington says: "My enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. But why should I expect to be exempt from censure,—the unfailing lot of an elevated situation? Merit and talents, with which I can have no pretensions of rivalry, have ever been subject to it. My heart tells me that it has been my unremitting desire to do the best that circumstances would permit; yet I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may, in many instances, deserve the imputation of error."

But, while all this was going on, Gen. Washington, though perfectly aware that he had enemies (and how many he could not tell), never made the

slightest effort to defend himself, and wrote to these very men on military matters just as before. His attention was fixed on the affairs of the army and the nation: his own private troubles were never allowed to occupy the time he considered due to the service.

Towards the end of November, Gen. Washington carefully examined the defences of Philadelphia, with the idea of attacking the British; but his officers pronounced the plan too expensive in the lives of the men, and he gave up the hope of a closing success.

Nothing more took place during this campaign but a little skirmishing. One day, Sir William Howe marched out, and Washington prepared for an engagement. "His men were inspirited by his words, but still more by his looks, so calm and determined; for the soldier regards the demeanor more than the words of his general in the hour of peril." But the American camp was on strong ground, and Washington would not allow himself to be drawn from it. The British general, therefore, manœuvred about considerably, and then returned to Philadelphia.

Here was another of those occasions on which Washington showed himself entirely superior to

selfish motives. Of course, it would have been agreeable to him to undertake some brilliant exploit, that would have silenced his enemies in Congress, and made the Southern army as popular as the Northern. What could be more unpleasant to an officer's feelings, than to be so often retreating, and declining engagements? But regard for his men's lives, and a prudent judgment of the chances of success, led him to decide on a course of conduct, and temptation could not draw him from it.

About the middle of December, the army gloomily marched off to Valley Forge in Chester County, on the west side of the Schuylkill River, about twenty miles from Philadelphia. The reasons for choosing this place were, that it enabled them to watch the city and protect the country; but the supplies of that region had been almost used up by the two armies, and it was extremely difficult to get forage for the horses. The march was in cold weather. The troops suffered much for want of clothing; and their shoes were so worn out, "that the footsteps of many might be tracked in blood."

Huts were immediately begun; but, during the building, Washington had occasion to order out certain troops. One general wrote to him in his

answer: "Fighting will be far preferable to starving." Another added: "Three days successively we have been destitute of bread; two days we have been entirely without meat. The men must be supplied, or they cannot be commanded. It is with pain I mention this distress: I know it will make your Excellency unhappy." In fact, there was a mutiny* for want of food; but the officers succeeded in checking it. The patience of the men under their sufferings touched their General deeply, and he was really indignant when he found the Legislature of Pennsylvania complained that this ill-supplied army went into winter-quarters at all. He wrote a long letter to the President of Congress, stating how often his active operations had been interfered with by the want of proper supplies, and urging the necessity of providing for the future wants of the army. He mentioned, to show the hardships they endured, that there were two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men in camp unfit for duty, for want of clothes and shoes; and that blankets were so scarce, that num-

* When soldiers refuse to obey their officers, and there are not enough faithful ones to control the disobedient, there is a mutiny.

bers of the men were obliged to keep warm at night by sitting up at fires, instead of sleeping "in a natural and common way." Nothing could be more wasteful than allowing the army to suffer so; for all but very strong men became sick from exposure, and thus could not be useful soldiers. When, after knowing all these privations, people who lived comfortably in houses expected such an army to hold out in tents against a well-supplied superior force quartered in a city, the Commander-in-chief could no longer keep silence, towards Congress at least. Motives of policy induced him to do so in every other direction, without caring for what was said of him. But his main object was to urge the necessity of doing better for the future.

A committee came from Congress to Valley Forge to assist in re-arranging the whole plan of the army. The experience of three campaigns had convinced Gen. Washington that there were serious defects in the way in which the army was collected, disciplined, and supplied. He made it his chief business, with the assistance of all his officers, to form a new and more judicious plan. As before, he had an almost endless number of letters to write to Congress on this subject, and to the officers of vari-

ous ranks. He said once, that he had been "a slave to the service"; and it was as true of the winters as of the summers of the war. His influence was great in keeping the officers with the army; but, from August, 1777, to March, 1778, "between two and three hundred officers resigned their commissions, and others were with difficulty dissuaded from it." The chief reason was that the officers feared they should receive nothing from the country at the end of the war. Other nations give half-pay to an officer, who, from old age or wounds, is unable to serve; and thus they have something to look forward to for themselves and their families. Gen. Washington strongly urged that such an arrangement should be made by the United States; but Congress, as Gen. Lee once said, "stumbled."

During this winter, Washington also carried on an unpleasant correspondence with Sir William Howe about the exchange of prisoners. But, while his thoughts were thus occupied, the distress around him continued. "For some days past, there has been little less than a famine in the camp," he wrote on the 16th of February. "A part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they

are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery. He wrote to every person who could possibly furnish supplies in great quantities; and, in the spring, their wants were considerably relieved, especially as they managed sometimes to capture the food which was on its way to Philadelphia, where the British lived in great luxury. Some of the English officers blamed Gen. Howe not a little for wasting the winter in dissipation, instead of attacking Gen. Washington. Had he done so, the American army would certainly have been in as great danger as at any time during the war.

In February, Mrs. Washington came to camp: some officers' wives were also there. The whole army lived in huts, arranged in streets, resembling a village. Mrs. Washington wrote to a friend: "The General's apartment is very small. He has had a log-cabin built to dine in, which has made our quarters much more tolerable than they were at first." But what cold winds must have blown round that dinner-table! Mrs. Washington certainly found a contrast between life at head-quarters and life at Mount Vernon.

In February, also, a valuable assistant to Wash-

ington arrived at Valley Forge, — Baron Steuben, a distinguished German officer, who was particularly successful in drilling men. This was confided entirely to him; and he taught not only the men, but the officers. He was strict in his ideas of discipline, and must have been shocked, at first, at the difference between the ragged Americans and the well-clothed, well-drilled European armies; but he had the good sense to make allowance for a young country. His men became fond of him in spite of some droll scenes when he was vexed at their stupidity, but could not scold them for want of English. He was alert; a great worker; intelligent, faithful, and kind; and he gave the Commander-in-chief, for the first time, an army such as it should be, — able to work “like a great machine.”

In April, Gen. Washington called a council of officers to consider whether he should take the field actively, or wait to see what the enemy would do. The majority were in favor of waiting.

The fear that France would join the United States, and the surrender of Burgoyne's army, led the British government to propose a reconciliation, and to send commissioners to this country to grant pardons. But it was too late. Congress refused to

see them. Washington said, "Nothing short of independence, it appears to me, can possibly do."

In May came news of a pleasanter character. France had formed an alliance for the war with the United States. This was a great event; for England would be obliged to make far greater efforts to defend herself against her old enemy, and to wage war in so many different places at once. It also showed, that at least one European nation thought the United States would be able to maintain themselves, and was willing to treat with them as a separate people. A day was set apart for rejoicing at Valley Forge. There was a religious service, a parade, firing of guns, and shouts of "Long live the King of France!" "Huzza for the American States!" The General dined in public with his officers; and, when he retired, there was much shouting and clapping of hands, which lasted until he had gone a quarter of a mile. The cabal might have had its influence; Congress might often oppose him; but no one could doubt that the army loved him.

Sir William Howe was recalled in May, and Sir Henry Clinton took the command in Philadelphia. There were soon signs that the army would leave

the city ; and then to know where they could be going was as puzzling as it had been the last year. It was rumored that they intended to attack Washington before their departure : and he kept his army constantly ready to move ; at the same time sending a warning letter to Gen. Gates, who commanded on the Hudson.

Some of the British were shipped off to attack the French possessions in the West Indies and Florida, and some sailed for New York ; and, on the 18th of June, Sir Henry Clinton, with the remainder, left Philadelphia very quietly, and began to march through New Jersey. Gen. Washington followed him, much disposed to make an attack, although several of his officers did not agree with him. Gen. Lee, who had been exchanged after a long captivity, and had joined the army, strongly urged letting the enemy go without even annoying them. Both armies marched very slowly, on account of heavy rains and sultry heat ; but, at last, Washington decided that an attack should be made on the enemy's rear. For this purpose, he sent forward a body of men under Lafayette ; but, as it was a large division, Gen. Lee asked, and obtained permission, to join it. His rank was higher than Lafayette's, so that he took

command. The Commander-in-chief, with the main body of the army, was only about three miles off.

On the morning of the 28th of June, Gen. Lee attacked the enemy after they had marched out of the town of Monmouth. He sent a message to Washington, who immediately brought forward the whole army; and was in Monmouth giving directions, when he saw Continental troops retreating. He was exceedingly provoked; for he had heard very little firing; and nothing could make greater confusion than to have all the advanced troops falling back while the others were coming up. He asked the officers why they were retreating: but they "did not know"; "it was by Gen. Lee's orders." What could be Lee's reasons? When he met the retreating general, he asked, in the sternest and even fiercest tone, "What is the meaning of all this, sir?" Lafayette reports that even Gen. Lee was disconcerted, and hesitated; for Washington's face was terrible. Lee excused himself by saying that he had not been prepared to meet the whole British army; but Washington was not satisfied. There was, however, no time to talk. The Commander-in-chief arranged the army quickly and

skilfully before the enemy appeared, and the battle was successful on the part of the Americans. It had not terminated at dusk, though the soldiers were much exhausted by the heat of the weather. Gen. Washington wrapped himself in his cloak, and lay down at the foot of a tree, talking with Lafayette about Gen. Lee's strange behavior. After the beginning of the battle, Lee had shown his usual coolness and courage, and no one could account for the retreat.

The next morning, the Americans were ready to renew the combat; but the British had decamped during the night. Washington thought it unwise to attempt to pursue them, as the weather was excessively hot, and the march must be through a very dry, sandy country. The next point of importance was to be near the city of New York, in order to watch the fleet, and the motions of the army. Washington encamped for a little while at Paramus in New Jersey.

Gen. Lee was tried by a military court for his behavior at Monmouth. He defended himself better than was expected; but the court ordered him to be deprived of his command for one year. At the end of that time, he offended Congress by a very hasty,

disrespectful note, and never returned to the army. Both before and after his trial, he did himself much harm by his abuse of Gen. Washington, who treated him very differently; never mentioning his name when it could be avoided, and, when he did, always acknowledging his "many great qualities."

On the 8th of July, a French fleet arrived, and anchored at the mouth of the Delaware. The commander, Count d'Estaing, immediately wrote to Gen. Washington in the most polite and cordial manner. Plans were arranged for a great naval battle, to take place in New York Harbor between the fleets, while the Americans prepared for an attack on the city immediately after it. All was expectation and hope on the part of the French and Americans, and the British and Tories were exceedingly active in measures of defence. But the stir and bustle resulted in nothing; for the French ships were too large to enter New York Harbor. The pilots refused to take them in.

A project was then formed for an attack on Rhode Island, where the enemy had stores. Gen. Sullivan commanded at Providence, and the Marquis de Lafayette and Gen. Greene were sent with some troops to his assistance. The French fleet sailed into Newport Harbor, and Lord Howe followed.

The American forces advanced successfully near the town. The fleets stood out to sea for the purpose of fighting ; but a furious storm dispersed and damaged them. Lord Howe went back to New York to refit, and the French admiral thought it his duty to go to Boston for the same reason. The generals on land were greatly disappointed, and all urged him to remain. He was not to be persuaded, however ; and it became their duty to leave the island as quickly as possible. This was successfully done ; and the expedition to Newport ended without loss, though with much disappointment. A good deal of irritation and jealousy sprung up between the officers who were engaged in this unlucky affair, and Gen. Washington was obliged to act constantly as peacemaker.

No more battles took place during this campaign. The British fleet sometimes perplexed Washington by its movements in the harbor ; but the object always proved to be a plundering expedition. The men landed before some flourishing town, burnt houses and shops, and carried off property ; or perhaps they went into the country, and stole forage and provisions from the farmers. If in these expeditions they surprised any American troops, they would surround

them by night, and put them to death, instead of making them prisoners. Such cruel injuries to peaceful people roused far more spirit of revenge and retaliation than open war. The worst part of them was, that they were almost always led or accompanied by Tories of the neighborhood; so that any old grudge might be the cause of a man's house being stripped of all its contents, or of his farm or workshop being utterly ruined. The pretence always was, that the sufferers were active in the American cause, and "proper objects of vengeance."

In November, a part of the British fleet set sail for an attack on the island of St. Lucia, belonging to the French. Another division carried troops to Georgia.

In December, Gen. Washington established the army for the winter. His own head-quarters were at Middlebrook in New Jersey, and the line stretched as far as Danbury in Connecticut. It was important to be near the Hudson.

The Marquis de Lafayette, much to Washington's regret, returned to France. He had won for himself a high place in the affections of the Commander-in-chief, and there were but few persons so entirely trusted.

Lafayette was now expecting a war in Europe, and every one perceived that the character of the contest in America was greatly changed. France was a formidable enemy to Great Britain. Both powers had distant colonies and islands, that might be attacked to advantage; and any such scheme would interfere with sending troops to America. The Marquis was quite eager for a grand plan of an invasion of Canada the next year, with the combined forces of France and the United States. Congress asked Gen. Washington's advice; and he, after collecting as much information as possible, did not approve of the project. Such a campaign must be immensely expensive in men and money, and would lay the country under too great obligations to France.

Washington was now extremely anxious for the general state of the nation. He saw plainly that Congress was not composed of men of the same character as at the beginning of the war. He dreaded the effects of selfishness and party-spirit. In one letter he says: "It is also most devoutly to be wished that faction was at an end, and that those to whom everything dear and valuable is intrusted would lay aside party views, and return to first prin-

ciples. Happy, thrice happy country, if such were the government of it! But, alas! we are not to expect that the path is to be strewed with flowers. That great and good Being who rules the universe has disposed matters otherwise, and for wise purposes, I am persuaded." Nothing could exceed his anxiety that the best men of every State should be sent to Congress, instead of occupying themselves with their private affairs, or with the concerns of their own State. To his former secretary he wrote: "By a faithful laborer in the cause, by one who wishes the prosperity of America most devoutly, but sees it, or thinks he sees it, on the brink of ruin, you are besought most earnestly, my dear Col. Harrison, to exert yourself in endeavoring to rescue your country by sending your best and ablest men to Congress. These characters must not slumber nor sleep at home in such a time of pressing danger. . . . I confess to you that I feel more real distress, on account of the present appearances of things, than I have done at any one time since the commencement of the dispute. But it is time to bid you adieu. Providence has heretofore taken us up, when all other means and hope seemed to be departing from us. In this I will confide."

The money matters of the United States were in a sad condition : it was very difficult to get gold and silver. Gen. Washington, therefore, proposed as little as possible for the next campaign. He thought it best, unless the enemy's force should be very much increased, for the Americans merely to defend themselves ; to keep together a small army, and give the country a breathing space ; to let the farmers get in their crops ; and, by economy, to arrange matters better in all departments.

One expedition, however, he recommended ; and it was undertaken early in the spring. This was against the Indians in the southern part of New York, and near the Susquehanna River. In the autumn before, one of the worst, most cruel ravaging parties of Tories had come from Niagara, and, joining with the Indians, had laid waste the Valley of Wyoming. Gen. Washington knew, from his experience twenty years before, that it was of no use to act on the defensive with Indians. He therefore sent men from the army for this service, and they were promptly joined by the militia. Under Gen. Sullivan's command, they defeated the savages, and destroyed dwellings and corn-fields.

The British plan for the summer proved to be the same as in the autumn before. No new troops arrived; no battles were to be fought: but the peaceful country was plundered, and thriving towns were burnt to ashes. This system was not at all agreeable to Sir Henry Clinton, but was pursued in obedience to orders from England.

It was impossible for Gen. Washington to prevent these disasters. His army was so small, that he dared not retreat far from New York; and the enemy's ships enabled them to move in any direction, accomplish their work of ruin, and return before he could even meet them by marching. The militia of the towns were obliged to do their best without the aid of regulars; and nothing tended so much to embitter the feeling of the nation against England as these cruel maraudings.

In May, Sir Henry Clinton himself led an expedition up the Hudson, and gained possession of Stony Point, and Verplanck's Point opposite to it. These two forts were very important to the Americans, because they protected King's Ferry,—the place where the army had so often crossed, and now the only communication between the New England States and the others. Sir Henry hoped

to advance from these two posts to West Point, "the guardian fortress of the river"; but Washington's vigilance prevented that. He stationed his army in the neighborhood, and employed the men daily on the works. He could not, however, be quite content to be inactive all summer; so in July, while a large number of the enemy were engaged in plundering the patriotic State of Connecticut, he planned an attempt to regain Stony Point. He offered the command of the surprise party to Gen. Wayne, who was nicknamed "Mad Anthony" from his desperately brave fighting.

The works were very carefully reconnoitred, and the attack was made a little after midnight on the 15th of July. The troops marched a distance of fourteen miles; but so many precautions had been taken, that no alarm was given. Not a dog barked near the fort; for they had all been privately destroyed. The Americans made the attack in two columns. In front of each came twenty men,— "the forlorn hope," as it is called. Their duty is to clear the way for the fighters. Gen. Wayne, just at the entrance of the fort, received a blow on the head. Thinking it was a death-wound, "Carry me into the fort," said he, "and let me die at the head

of my column." He soon recovered, and, instead of dying at the head of *his* column, had the pleasure of meeting in the centre of the works the head of the *other*.

This victory was nobly won. The Americans dashed on with the bayonet, and met with a fierce resistance, as was shown by the number of killed and wounded in their forlorn hope; but they spared their conquered foe, and none were killed after the combat. Their mercy did honor to both officers and men: for it is not always easy to prevent slaughter in the excitement and confusion of such a night attack; and Wayne's men had special motives for revenge, on account of the death of their comrades two years before.

It had been a part of Washington's plan to attack also Fort Lafayette, on Verplanck's Point; but, in consequence of a mistake in carrying Gen. Wayne's letter, the division intended for this part of the work arrived too late.

When Gen. Washington examined Stony Point, he found that he had not men enough to defend it against the enemy, and finish the fortifications. He therefore determined to destroy the works. This may seem like giving up all the benefits of

the victory. But it was not so: there was an effect on the minds of the army and the nation from every such exploit. And, as you have seen before, the General and the soldiers of the Revolution had often to be satisfied with a victory that just failed to do what they had hoped it would, and to lose advantages that a few more men or a little more money would have secured.

Sir Henry Clinton retook Stony Point, and fortified it again, so that this post changed hands three times in one summer. He also attempted to draw Washington into an action, but did not succeed.

The American head-quarters were now at West Point, and the works progressed rapidly. In a letter written on the 1st of August, Gen. Washington speaks thus of his own ignorance of the national affairs: "I shall be happy in such communications as your leisure and other considerations will permit you to transmit to me; for I am as totally unacquainted with the political state of things, and what is going forward in the great national council, as if I was an alien;* when a competent knowledge of the temper and designs of our allies from time to

* A person born in a foreign country.

time, and the frequent changes and complexion of affairs in Europe, might, as they ought to do, have a considerable influence on the operations of our army, and would in many cases determine the propriety of measures, which, under a cloud of darkness, can only be groped at." It seems strange that Congress should not have had more intercourse with the Commander-in-chief; but, in fact, there was probably not much to tell. The chief event of the war seems to have been the success of the French fleet in the West Indies; and, though this may appear to have been a very useless campaign to the Americans, it must be remembered, that, at the same time, the British were gaining nothing at all; and it was far more expensive to England to maintain men in a foreign country, than it could be to the United States to keep together their little army.

The style of living at head-quarters has often been spoken of as very plain indeed. Here is an account of it from Gen. Washington's own pen:—

“ West Point, Aug. 16, 1779.

“ To DR. JOHN COCHRAN : —

“ Dear Doctor, — I have asked Mrs. Cochran and Mrs. Livingston to dine with me to-morrow ;

but am I not bound in honor to apprise them of their fare? As I hate deception, even where the imagination only is concerned, I will. It is needless to premise that my table is large enough to hold the ladies. Of this they had ocular proof yesterday. To say how it is usually covered is more essential; and this shall be the purport of my letter.

“Since our arrival at this happy spot, we have had a ham, sometimes a shoulder of bacon, to grace the head of the table. A piece of roast beef adorns the foot; and a dish of beans or greens, almost imperceptible, decorates the centre. When the cook has a mind to cut a figure, — which, I presume, will be the case to-morrow, — we have two beefsteak-pies or dishes of crabs in addition, one on each side of the centre dish, dividing the space, and reducing the distance between dish and dish to about six feet, which, without them, would be near twelve feet apart. Of late, he has had the surprising sagacity to discover that apples will make pies; and it is a question, if, in the violence of his efforts, we do not get one of apples instead of having both of beef-steaks. If the ladies can put up with such entertainment, and will submit to partake of it on plates once tin, but now iron (not become so by the labor

of scouring), I shall be happy to see them ; and am, dear Doctor, yours, &c."

No doubt those ladies were pleased and proud to dine at head-quarters ; but they did not, could not, know how such a distinction would be valued in after-times.

It is a great blessing to feel such perfect respect and affection as Washington inspired in those who knew him. Most great men, as you will find in reading history, have their great faults, which their admirers shut their eyes to as well as they can, and excuse on account of their great talents or great virtues. But think over Washington's life from the time he began his surveying expeditions, and what great fault can you name ? No doubt he had a high temper ; but how very few times he lost command of it ! and there is far more virtue in having a high temper, and controlling it, than in being good-natured without effort. And how patient he was with other people's mistakes and faults ; how considerate always for his soldiers ; how affectionate to his young friends ; how modest, how self-denying, as to military glory ; and, above all, how truly he loved his country ! For her sake, *for our sakes*, he

gave up his home, and endured labor and hardship cheerfully. In the letter just quoted, he makes light of his discomforts ; but how many of us would like to dine in that way, if we were in the habit of faring much better at home? And you may be very sure that the table at Mount Vernon was always well-arranged ; for Mrs. Washington was an excellent housekeeper. No matter what company the Commander-in-chief might have to entertain : if the President of Congress came to dine with him, or half a dozen French counts fresh from all the luxuries of Paris, there was nothing better to set before them ; and in the winter-quarters, during the times of scarcity, probably nothing half so good.

People were also much more ceremonious in manners and dress than they are at the present time. Gentlemen wore their hair powdered ; ruffled shirts ; and long silk stockings, drawn smoothly up to the knee. Can you imagine officers in camp having their hair nicely powdered before they went out to drill their men or to fight a battle? And though, of course, in actual war, when men are fighting and marching, they have no time to think of trifles, during the long months of encampment and inactivity most people would have been annoyed and vexed by little every-day privations.

The only other enterprise of this year was a successful attack on a fort at Paulus Hook, opposite New York, planned and accomplished by Major Henry Lee,* of Virginia,—a brave officer, and rather a favorite with the Commander-in-chief. It is supposed that his mother was the “lowland beauty” of Washington’s boyish admiration. The taking of the fort was a surprise, somewhat in the style of Gen. Wayne’s storming of Stony Point, and equally daring.

The motions of the French fleet were the subject of greatest interest to both armies during the summer and autumn. Gen. Washington hoped it would come to New York, and prepared himself for making an attack by land. Sir Henry Clinton also expected a combination against him. But, after the defeat of the French and Americans at Savannah, Count d’Estaing left the coast of the United States. Still, the mere uncertainty had been useful to the Americans, as it had prevented Sir Henry from sending detachments to the Southern States.

Gen. Washington’s fortification of West Point

* Called “Lighthorse Harry,” from the troop he commanded.

had restrained the British from making any attempt upon it; so that they could not boast of having gained anything in the campaign of 1778.

The news that the French fleet had sailed reached Washington late in November, and, giving up all thoughts of action, he put his army into winter-quarters at Morristown and in the Highlands.

Sir Henry Clinton seems to have doubted whether the French were really off the coast; for he did not go to the South until December. When he began his preparations, Washington detached all the Southern troops he could possibly spare, for the protection of their own homes.

Morristown was destined to be again a place of great suffering to the American army. The winter was a very severe one, and there was a great scarcity. In one of his letters, Washington says: "We have never experienced a like extremity at any period of the war"; and on the 8th of January, 1780, he adds: "For a fortnight past, the troops, both officers and men, have been almost perishing with want; yet they have borne their sufferings with a patience that merits the approbation, and ought to excite the sympathies, of their countrymen." He was obliged to ask the State of New Jersey to fur-

nish the supplies which it was impossible to purchase.* And the State answered with spirit. The farmers brought to camp both provisions and clothes, and "the women met together to knit and sew for the soldiery." Mrs. Washington set them a good example: it is said that, while she was at camp, she was always knitting stockings.

As the cold increased, New York Harbor was frozen over, and there would have been a fine opportunity to attack the enemy, — so fine, that Gen. Knyphausen, who was left in command there, prepared himself. But the American army was in too wretched a state to undertake anything of importance. A little expedition against Staten Island failed. The enemy sent out two or three plundering parties, which destroyed private property as usual, and took the farmers prisoners. The neighborhood of New York suffered more than any other part of the country during the war, and the people became rough and warlike.

The most unpleasant duty Gen. Washington had to perform this winter, was the examination of a complaint brought by the government of Pennsyl-

* The farmers received certificates promising future payment.

vania against Gen. Benedict Arnold, who had been stationed at Philadelphia since the British left it in 1778. He had doubtless been extravagant and domineering; but, after a very long and tedious inquiry, Washington's sympathies appear to have been more with him than with the Pennsylvanians. A reprimand was ordered by a court-martial* to be delivered by the Commander-in-chief, and Washington expressed it in the gentlest words that could be used on such an occasion.

Spring brought little relief either to the army or to the General. Provisions and money continued to be terribly scarce. Washington was extremely anxious for the fate of the army opposed to Sir Henry Clinton in South Carolina. He would gladly have gone there himself, but felt that he could not leave the North. He sent thither the Maryland troops and a regiment of artillery, under Baron de Kalb. To this excellent officer he wrote on the 2d of April: "The prospect, my dear Baron, is gloomy, and the storm threatens; but I hope we shall extricate ourselves, and bring everything to

* A court made up of officers, instead of lawyers, judge, and jury.

a prosperous issue. I have been so inured to difficulties in the course of this contest, that I have learned to look upon them with more tranquillity than formerly. Those which now present themselves no doubt require vigorous exertions to overcome them, *and I am far from despairing of doing it.*" In addition to all the known troubles, Washington had lately been told that the cabal was at work again; but he was never disposed to make himself unhappy by suspicion.

The distress and discontent of the army induced Gen. Washington to write, as before, a letter to Congress describing their situation; and, as before, a committee was appointed, who, on arriving at camp, found that the account was not exaggerated. There had been no pay for five months; and there were seldom provisions for six days in advance. Sometimes the men had been, for several days in succession, without meat. There was little proper food for the sick in the hospital-stores, and there was no forage for the horses. The officers fared about as ill as the men; and it is said that many of them lived for some time on bread and cheese, "rather than take any of the scanty allowance of meat from the men." Gen. Schuyler—Washing-

ton's good friend, now a member of Congress — was one of the committee.

Another warmly attached friend was soon to arrive in camp. The Marquis de Lafayette returned to this country in April, 1780. It is said that Washington's eyes filled with tears as he read the letter announcing his arrival at Boston. He brought the good news that another French fleet was on its way, and that soldiers would arrive in it. The Marquis hurried on to Philadelphia to offer his services again to Congress. While he was there, Washington, in one of his letters, says: "Finish your business as soon as you can, and hasten *home*; for so I would always have you consider head-quarters and my house."

In May of this year, a mutiny broke out among the soldiers in consequence of their privations; and Gen. Washington, besides writing to Congress, sent a long letter to President Reed, calling on the State of Pennsylvania for flour. He urged that great efforts had been made by France, and that our own ought to be equally great; that to "confess to our allies that we look wholly to them for our safety," would be "a state of humiliation and littleness against which the feelings of every good American ought to revolt."

His anxiety about the general condition of the country was at this time very great. He saw that the nation relied too much on France, and that Congress was divided into parties. He wrote to a member: "I see one head gradually changing into thirteen; I see one army branching into thirteen, which, instead of looking up to Congress as the supreme controlling power of the United States, are considering themselves dependent on their respective States."

At this time came news of the disastrous loss of Charleston, South Carolina, soon followed by the return of Sir Henry Clinton.

The enemy made two expeditions into New Jersey in the course of the spring; partly, it seemed, for plunder, and partly to tempt Gen. Washington to an engagement. But the army was in no condition for a regular battle, and Washington contented himself with defences and skirmishes. The New Jersey militia were by this time so trained to warfare, that they were readily assembled by signals. They saw with pride and pleasure the enemy moving off from before the heights of Morristown; and the people of Morris County still boast that the British "were never able to get a footing among our hills." These

excursions of the enemy gave the Commander-in-chief some concern for the safety of West Point; but his energy was principally employed in getting the army into a state of readiness to act with the French when they should arrive.

The fleet appeared at Newport on the 10th of July; and the commander of the land forces, Count de Rochambeau, immediately wrote to Gen. Washington in the most polite and friendly terms. The Marquis de Lafayette was despatched to Newport to explain the intentions and wishes of the Commander-in-chief. As before, he proposed a combined attack on New York; to which the admiral agreed, whenever his force should be superior to the British. At this time, it was not so; and he therefore desired to wait until a second division of the French fleet should follow him.

In the mean time, Sir Henry Clinton embarked at New York for an attack on the French encampment at Newport. Gen. Washington thought he should best assist his allies by drawing near to New York, as if to strike a blow in Sir Henry's absence; and this move of his probably recalled the British commander. He came back, leaving the men-of-war to blockade the French fleet in Newport Harbor.

The New-England militia had been called out in anticipation of this attack, and both officers and men mingled with the French in a very pleasant way. The young French officers—many of them, like Lafayette, of high rank—came out to this country full of enthusiasm. They were probably much disappointed at the weakness of the army and the great scarcity of money, and they must have found the manner of living surprisingly simple; but they were always gay and polite, and made themselves friends among the people of Newport, and all the American officers who had anything to do with them. Gen. Washington took the greatest pains to keep up this friendly spirit between the two armies. He recommended wearing a mixed cockade of black and white, in compliment to the French, who usually wore white ones, while the Americans had hitherto worn black ones.

In the month of August, all Washington's hopes and plans were put in peril by a change in the mode of supplying the army. Congress had ordered a new system to be adopted, under which Gen. Greene, the quartermaster-general,* declared that it

* The quartermaster-general marks out the land for an en-

was impossible for him to do the work. He therefore resigned his office. Congress was extremely angry with him for doing this at such a time ; and Washington, as usual, acted as mediator. He also addressed a long letter to the President of Congress, representing the feeble state of the army, and pointing out the measures of relief. He was almost discouraged by the want of public spirit, as may be seen by the following passage : “ If either the temper or the resources of the country will not admit of an alteration, we may expect soon to be reduced to the humiliating condition of seeing the cause of America, in America, upheld by foreign arms. The generosity of our allies has a claim to all our confidence, and all our gratitude ; but it is neither for the honor of America, nor for the interest of the common cause, to leave the work entirely to them.”

Early in September came the melancholy doings of the defeat of Gen. Gates at Camden, North Carolina ; but, before the close of this month, the *blackest* event of the war—the treason of Gen. Arnold—cast its terrible gloom over Washington, and every

campment, collects provisions, and receives orders from the general.

patriot throughout the nation. Gen. Arnold, you remember, had got into trouble with the State of Pennsylvania. Since that time, he had been restless and discontented, complaining of the ingratitude of his country, and always greedy for money. His extravagant habits kept him constantly in want. This craving for money, joined with resentment against the United States, seems to have been the motive that led him to correspond with Sir Henry Clinton under an assumed name. Occasionally, to prove his sincerity, he gave information of the motions of the American army. Doubtless his request to be allowed to command at West Point during the summer of 1780 was with the intention of betraying it to the enemy. The plan was, that he should furnish the enemy with correct drawings of the works; and that, whenever they should make the attack, he should surrender the fortress with but slight resistance. The correspondence was managed by Major John André,—a gallant officer, and a man of talent and most agreeable temper.

Though many letters had passed between them, the precise sum for which Arnold was to sell his trust had not been fixed, when, on the 21st of September, Major André came up the river to see him.

They met at night in a lonely spot ; but, not being able to agree exactly, Arnold persuaded André to go to a neighboring house. Without letting André know it, he took him within the American lines, where no British officer could be safe. Major André was very uneasy there, and set out on his return to New York as soon as possible. He concealed the plans of West Point between his stockings and his feet. He was on horseback ; and, after many difficulties and delays, he got out of the American lines, and was riding along on the *neutral ground*, when he was stopped by three men, whom he supposed to be Tories. They were really Whigs. They asked him questions ; they examined his papers ; and one of them plainly saw that he was a spy. They took him to the nearest officer, Lieut.-Col. Jameson, who recognized Arnold's handwriting, and sent the papers by express to Gen. Washington. Then, very stupidly, he sent a letter also to Arnold, telling him what he had done.

Gen. Washington was returning from Hartford, where he had met the French officers, who were full of enthusiasm for him. The people of Connecticut, too, gave him a most cordial welcome. Arriving at a town by night, young and old poured out in

crowds, by torchlight, eager to see him. Washington, much moved, said to Count Dumas, the aid of the French General: "We may be beaten by the English,—it is the chance of war; but there is the army they will never conquer!"

It was the General's intention to breakfast at Arnold's house on the morning of September 24th; but, being delayed by a little business, he sent forward his aids with an apology to Mrs. Arnold. They sat down without him; and, while at table, Arnold received the letter from Col. Jameson. He saw at once that he should be detected, called his wife out of the room, and told her he was ruined, and must fly for his life! He said to his guests, that he must go immediately to West Point to receive the Commander-in-chief. He galloped to the river, threw himself into his barge, and reached the British ship "Vulture" in the afternoon.

At dinner-time, Gen. Washington received the letter sent to him by express. After spending a few minutes alone with Col. Hamilton, he showed the papers to Lafayette and Gen. Knox. "Whom can we trust now?" were the only words he said.

His first idea was to arrest the traitor; but it was, unhappily, too late; his next, to secure West Point.

The danger was frightful. He could not tell who among the enemy might possess copies of Arnold's drawings, nor how far their plans might be advanced. Perhaps there would be an attack that very night. Nor could he know how many Americans were engaged in the plot. He ordered in the troops as fast as possible, and sent special directions to have Major André well secured. But, in the midst of all his business and anxiety, he remembered poor Mrs. Arnold, innocent and most wretched. No one could comfort her in such distress as hers; but Washington showed her every kindness.

The next painful event that followed was the trial of André. A board of fourteen general officers, and their president, Gen. Greene, decided that he was a spy, and, having been taken prisoner, must suffer death. The greatest interest was felt in his situation by both armies. He was very popular with his own countrymen; and Sir Henry Clinton was much attached to him, and wrote two letters to Washington, urging a favorable view of his case. All the American officers who had the charge of him were very warmly interested by his frankness, his modesty, his cheerfulness, and his charming conversation. He was universally pitied, and Washington would

hardly have been blamed had he interfered to save his life. But he thought it his duty not to do so. By the laws of war, spies are always executed. Every military man knows this; and when André undertook to treat with Gen. Arnold he was perfectly aware of the risk he was running.

Washington was strictly upright; and, to his mind, there was something most repulsive in the idea of offering money to a brave man like Arnold, to induce him to betray his trust. He was not, therefore, inclined to treat Major André, whom he never saw, with more favor than he would have shown to any other spy.* He was sure that the trial had been a fair and full one. The sentence was executed. André uttered no complaints; always behaved with manliness and perfect composure; and wrote in one of his letters, "I receive the greatest attentions from his Excellency, Gen. Washington, and from every person under whose charge I happen to be placed."

Arnold added, if that were possible, to the infamy of his conduct, by the insolent letters he wrote at

* It is believed that Washington would have been thankful to have exchanged André for Arnold.

this time to Gen. Washington. In spite of the failure of his plot, he received a considerable sum of money, and the rank of brigadier-general in the British army; but he was despised as a traitor by all honorable men in both countries.

In consequence of the ill success of Gen. Gates at the South, Congress requested Washington to select another officer for that important command. He gave it with pleasure to his friend, Gen. Greene, in whom he had the greatest confidence.

The usual gloomy prospects of the army and the Commander-in-chief in autumn were a little brightened this year by a resolution of Congress to engage soldiers, in future, *for the war*, and to give the officers half-pay at its end. The first of these measures Washington had urged for four years; the second, for more than two. He needed great patience, and he possessed it.

At this time Lafayette was very anxious to accomplish some brilliant stroke, that might be heard of in France. He persuaded Gen. Washington to agree to an attack on Fort Washington, at the northern end of Manhattan Island; and perhaps, if all things were favorable, on New York itself.

While this project was talked over, and careful

examinations of the enemy's posts were made, another French officer, the Marquis de Chastellux, came to pay a visit at head-quarters. He appears to have been charmed with Washington's appearance, and his treatment of him. As he rode up, he observed Lafayette talking with an officer "tall of stature, with a mild and noble countenance." This was the Commander-in-chief, whose cordial welcome seems to have made ample amends for the small quarters for which he apologized. The Marquis praised Washington's fine horses, "trained by himself," and his excellent riding.

At the dinner-table, the next day, there were twenty guests; and Washington talked somewhat about the war, but always, the Marquis observed, in such a modest way as showed he did it to please others, not himself. An aid sat at his side to carve the dishes; and, through him, the General sometimes gave a toast. In the evening, there was a light supper. "It is customary," writes the Marquis, "towards the end of supper, to call upon each one for a *sentiment*; that is to say, the name of some lady to whom he is attached by some sentiment either of love, friendship, or simple preference." No doubt, all the American officers exerted them-

selves during this visit to make the camp agreeable to their French brothers-in-arms. It is one of the pleasantest things said of Washington, that he always enjoyed the company of young men. Even when he was oppressed with care, some one of his young friends was constantly with him; and, though he took little part in gay conversation, his smile showed that he enjoyed it.

During the time that the Marquis de Chastellux was at head-quarters, news came that several British ships had made their appearance in the Hudson. Lafayette's plan was therefore given up, and Washington's arrangements appear to have been made in vain. His aid, Col. Humphreys, said: "The Commander-in-chief spent a whole campaign in ripening this project. . . . Never was a plan better arranged, and never did circumstances promise more sure or complete success."

In a letter to Gen. Lincoln, Washington writes: "I do not mean to hasten your return to the army; for that, alas! is upon the eve of its annual dissolution; consequently, of the enemy's advantage."

The American army went into winter-quarters near New York and West Point. The French remained at Newport.

Washington had been much pained by the inactivity of this campaign. It was truly mortifying, that, after the arrival of the French land and sea forces, nothing had been done. He dreaded the sights of suffering which he expected at the winter-quarters; and the letters he received from Gen. Greene gave disheartening accounts of the Southern army, which seemed to be even in a more wretched condition than the Northern one. The people of the Eastern and Middle States, thinking that the chief fighting now took place at the South, were slow to furnish supplies of either men, money, or provisions. The Tories were numerous in the Southern States, and the patriots had had no experience in carrying on the war in their own country. Congress, too, seemed to have no power to call into use the money of the nation, and in December, 1780, decided to do what Gen. Washington had several times recommended, — borrow money from France. Col. Laurens, one of the General's aids, was sent to Paris to obtain the loan; and the Commander-in-chief gave him instructions both in writing and in conversations. The French government lent the money, but requested that Washington should spend the portion intended for the army.

New Year's Day, 1781, was marked by a most unhappy event. Six regiments of Pennsylvania troops mutinied at Morristown. After an affray with their officers, they marched off to Philadelphia to demand what, with truth, they called *their rights*. Gen. Wayne, who commanded them, behaved with great coolness and judgment. He knew what they had borne. He wrote of them: "Poorly clothed, badly fed, and worse paid; some of them not having received a paper dollar * for near twelve months; exposed to winter's piercing cold, to drifting snows, and chilling blasts; with no protection but old worn-out coats, tattered linen overalls, and but one blanket between three men;—in this situation, the enemy began to work upon their passions, and had found means to circulate some proclamations among them." On their march, Gen. Wayne took care to supply them with provisions; and these extraordinary mutineers did no harm to the country people, and kept order among themselves. Sir Henry Clinton sent spies among them to tempt them; but they gave them up to Gen. Wayne, indignant at the thought of

* A paper dollar was not then worth a quarter of a dollar in silver.

“turning *Arnolds*.” At Princeton, President Reed met them; although several persons warned him that he was running a great risk. “I have but one life to lose,” said he, “and my country has the first claim to it.” The end of the matter was, that most of the men were discharged with promise of payment.

The Commander-in-chief had been very anxious during all this time. His first impulse was to leave his quarters at New Windsor, on the Hudson, for Morristown; but he reflected that he should arrive too late. He was entirely satisfied with Wayne’s account of what he had done and proposed to do; and he was not sure how the men on the Hudson would behave, should he leave them. Unhappily, the mutiny spread to the New Jersey soldiers. Towards them Gen. Washington adopted a severer course than the State of Pennsylvania had pursued, and the spirit of discontent made no further advances.

Arnold was sent, at the end of December, 1780, to Virginia, in command of a plundering or marauding expedition. Two colonels accompanied him, whom he was ordered to consult on every point. It was plain that Sir Henry Clinton dared not trust him. To oppose him, Washington sent, in Febru-

ary, 1781, a detachment under Lafayette, who, he hoped, would be useful in uniting the American land forces with the French fleet.

About this time, a coolness arose between the Commander-in-chief and his aid, Col. Hamilton, whom he so highly valued. Hamilton says himself, that one day, as he passed Gen. Washington on the stairs, the latter told him he wanted to speak to him. Hamilton answered that he would wait upon him immediately; and went below, and delivered an important letter. Returning to the General, he met Lafayette, who stopped him; and they talked together "about a minute on a matter of business." At the head of the stairs he found Gen. Washington, who said to him, "Col. Hamilton, you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes. I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." Hamilton replied, "I am not conscious of it, sir; but, since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." "Very well, sir," answered the General, "if it be your choice," or words to that effect. In less than an hour, Washington despatched another of his aids to Hamilton with a message, assuring him of his regard and confidence in him, and expressing a wish to see him, that they might

talk the matter over, and be good friends again. Hamilton declined the interview, and remained firm in his resolve not to serve as aide-de-camp again; though he continued with the army, and offered to perform all the duties of his office until a substitute could be found.

It seems rather haughty on his part to have refused such an offer of reconciliation from the Commander-in-chief, a friend so much older than himself. His immediately answering, too, "we part," after a single rebuke from Gen. Washington, does not sound as if he were a very patient young gentleman. Perhaps Washington was mistaken in saying that he had waited ten minutes (for time seems long to one who waits, and sometimes very short to one who talks); but how often do people, *in less than an hour*, express themselves willing to pass over an offence? In spite, however, of Hamilton's high spirit, Washington and he were always good friends in after life.

About this time, Washington acknowledges assistance received from the ladies of Philadelphia for the army. They sent money and clothes. The American women, all through the tedious war, were patriotic, and always ready to give whatever they pos-

sessed, whether it was the dinner they were cooking before the fire, or the money they had saved in those hard times.

As spring came on, Washington watched with intense interest the motions of the Southern armies. In the Carolinas, Gen. Greene had been repeating his own experiences in having to fight without means, and to animate his soldiers under cruel hardships. After describing to Washington the immense efforts he had made in retreating before Lord Cornwallis, he adds (February 15th): "The miserable condition of the troops for clothing has rendered the march the most painful imaginable, many hundreds of the soldiers tracking the ground with their bloody feet. Your feelings for the sufferings of the soldier, had you been with us, would have been severely tried." Gen. Greene took Washington for his model, and imitated him, not only in caution as to fighting, but in cheerfulness under reverses and disappointments. With his very small body of regulars and the uncertain militia, aided by the bold horsemen of the country, he succeeded in delaying and harassing Lord Cornwallis to such a degree, that the latter did not reach Virginia, where he was to join Gen. Phillips and Arnold, until the 20th of May.

Greene turned to South Carolina to face Lord Rawdon.

Lord Cornwallis, after he arrived in Virginia, carried on a most active campaign against the Marquis de Lafayette; and, in one of his letters, said, "That boy cannot escape me." Lafayette, however, proved himself worthy of the trust Washington had given him. With great prudence, he forbore to make any attacks, and contented himself with maintaining his ground. Lord Cornwallis had a superior army, and the great advantage of numerous horsemen. The stables of the Virginia gentlemen were full of fine horses, which they had neglected to remove out of the way of the British. The enemy, of course, took possession of them.

In a letter to Gen. Washington, in July, the Marquis wrote, "I am anxious to know your opinion concerning the Virginia campaign. . . . So long as Lord Cornwallis wished for an action, not one gun was fired; from the moment he declined it, we have been skirmishing; but I took care not to commit the army." Washington's answer was, "Be assured, my dear Marquis, your conduct meets my warmest approbation, as it must that of everybody."

In the course of the warfare, one small plundering

vessel had threatened Mount Vernon ; and Gen. Washington's agent, Lund Washington, saved the property, and probably prevented the house from being burnt, by giving the men refreshments. Gen. Washington had no doubt that this was done from the best motives ; but it was very painful to him to think that any person representing him should have had such intercourse with the enemy. His rebuke was a severe one ; but he began kindly with, " Dear Lund, I am very sorry to hear of your loss ; I am a little sorry to hear of my own ; but that which gives me most concern is, that you should go on board the enemy's vessels, and furnish them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me to have heard, that, in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my house, and laid the plantation in ruins."

Washington remained in his quarters at New Winsor through the spring, vainly endeavoring to collect a respectable army. Congress had voted him a large supply of troops for the campaign of 1781 ; but the men came in very slowly, and both money and clothes were scarce. It was mortifying to the Commander-in-chief that the French should witness such painful deficiencies ; but when, in July, they

marched from Newport to the neighborhood of the Hudson, they were received with the greatest cordiality.

In the course of the summer, Gen. Washington was much urged to go to Virginia himself; but he refused, saying that he was more useful by threatening the city of New York, and preventing Lord Cornwallis from receiving any assistance.

A plan was arranged for an attack on the forts on the northern end of Manhattan Island; but it was never made. The country was cleared, however, of some of the bands of Tories who had so long troubled it. Both armies prepared for the long-expected attack on the city by land and by sea; but, in August, letters were received saying that Count de Grasse, the commander of the French fleet, could be in America but a short time, and would appear in Chesapeake Bay.

Gen. Washington immediately changed his designs, and kept his intentions a profound secret even from his own army, lest Sir Henry should find out what he proposed to do. An encampment was marked out in New Jersey, fuel collected, and an oven built, as if to bake bread for the troops while they besieged New York. By such means, Sir Henry Clinton was entirely deceived, and did not

send any aid to Lord Cornwallis until it was quite too late. When he was satisfied that Washington had really gone to Virginia, he despatched a plundering expedition into Connecticut, and gave the command of it to Arnold. The traitor consented to pillage his native State.

Washington and the army were cordially welcomed at Philadelphia; and, when near Chester, they received the joyful news of the arrival of the fleet. Lafayette wrote to express his delight at the prospect of seeing the Commander-in-chief at the head of the allies; but the greatest pleasure Washington experienced on the march was that of spending two days at Mount Vernon, and entertaining the French generals there for a single night. He had been absent rather more than six years; but neither cares, nor labor, nor honors, cooled his love for his country home.

On his arrival at Yorktown, Virginia, Gen. Washington found Lord Cornwallis so shut in by the French and American troops on land, and by the fleet on the sea-side, that retreat was out of the question. His Lordship could only retire within his fortifications, which were about the town of York, and Gloucester Point, on the opposite side of the river.

The last fortnight in September was spent in collecting the troops, artillery, and various other things needed for a siege ; in arranging plans by the heads of the land and sea forces ; and in a little manœuvring of the two fleets.

On the 9th of October, the siege of Yorktown was begun. "Gen. Washington put the match to the first gun. A furious discharge of cannon and mortars * immediately followed, and Earl Cornwallis received his first salutation." For several days, the allied armies continued to fire upon the town. By night and by day, the sound of the heavy guns was heard ; and the shells of the besieged and besiegers crossed each other in the air. The English ships were also much damaged.

On the 14th of October, attacks were made on two redoubts by a party of French on one side, and of Americans, commanded by Lafayette, on the other. Eager to outdo each other, and full of courage, they rushed on so violently, that the British gave way before them. Washington, with many officers about him, was watching this assault with intense interest. Those who stood near him were afraid he would be

* A mortar is a large gun of a peculiar kind.

hit by a chance shot, and one of his aids ventured to say that the situation was very much exposed. "If you think so," replied he gravely, "you are at liberty to step back." A little later, a musket-ball hit a cannon near the group, and fell at Washington's feet. Gen. Knox grasped his arm. "My dear General," exclaimed he, "we can't spare you yet." — "It is a spent ball," * answered the Commander-in-chief quietly: "no harm is done." When the redoubts were taken, he drew a long breath, and said to Knox, "The work is done, and *well done!*"

The siege went on; and, on the 16th of October, Lord Cornwallis found himself in so hopeless a state, that he made an unsuccessful attempt to escape. On the 17th, he proposed to surrender; and, on the 19th, his army actually laid down their arms in the presence of the assembled forces of France and the United States.

This victory caused the greatest joy to the whole nation. Congress appointed a day of thanksgiving, and voted thanks to all the generals and many other distinguished officers. The captured colors were

* A ball that has gone as far as it can, and therefore spent its force.



Washington in the trenches at Yorktown.



presented to Washington, and the guns to Counts Rochambeau and De Grasse. It was felt throughout the country, that a death-blow was given to the war, and the rejoicing of the people was even greater than that of the army.

To Cornwallis the surrender was a bitter mortification, which he felt the more keenly when he learned that Sir Henry Clinton had sailed from New York with seven thousand troops on the very day that he was laying down his arms at Yorktown. Gen. Washington's management of this campaign, his long delay near New York, his judicious selection of troops to serve with Lafayette, his secrecy, and his complete misleading of the enemy, were much admired both in Europe and America. In England, the news of the surrender of Yorktown was a great disappointment, and a fatal blow to those who wished to carry on the war. One story of a patriot at the siege of Yorktown deserves to be remembered. Gen. Nelson, of Virginia, who had raised troops, and supplied money at his own risk, was asked what part of the town it would be best to fire upon. He pointed to a large, handsome house, which he thought was probably the enemy's head-quarters. It proved to be his own house.

After this great success, Gen. Washington wished much to go directly on to South Carolina, and, with the assistance of the French fleet, to retake Charleston. But the Count de Grasse said that it was impossible for him to remain so long on the American coast. Washington was therefore obliged to content himself with sending two thousand troops to help Gen. Greene after his hard summer. At Yorktown he had received a letter from Greene announcing the partial victory at Eutaw Springs. The difficulties of the campaign in South Carolina had been great; the British army had been large, active, and well commanded; and the inhabitants of the country were at first inclined to sympathize with them. Gen. Greene had often had militia, and his army was wretchedly supplied: on the other hand, he had had brave horsemen in abundance. His handful of Northern troops, and the officers who came with them, had supported him admirably; and he himself had carried out the policy learned from Washington,—of avoiding battles, and constantly watching and annoying the enemy. He had confined the British within narrow limits; and, before he took command, they had overrun the whole State. His skill, and the courage of all under him, even

the militia-men, gained them great honor in this year (1781).

Washington was detained some weeks at Yorktown, while the troops were embarked for the Hudson River, and the prisoners disposed of. On his way to Philadelphia, he stopped at Eltham, where Mr. Custis, the only son of Mrs. Washington, died immediately after his arrival. This event was a great grief to all the relations of Mr. Custis. He had been carefully educated by Washington, and his friends believed that he would distinguish himself. It must have been truly painful to Gen. Washington to come home from his triumph to share the sorrow of the mother and widow of this young man, for whom he had always felt a warm affection. To console Mrs. Washington, he adopted the two youngest children, — a boy and a girl, — who always lived in his house from this time.

Lafayette returned to France in the autumn of this year, where Congress hoped his influence would still be useful to the cause of America.

At Philadelphia, Washington used every means in his power to induce Congress to make vigorous preparations for the next campaign. He was afraid that the success in Virginia, and the brighter pros-

pects at the South, would make the country too confident, and too indifferent about the next year.

In May, 1782, Sir Guy Carleton arrived in New York to succeed Sir Henry Clinton, who had asked to be recalled. There were no signs of carrying on the war; on the contrary, the new General used most peaceful language. But Washington still doubted the real intentions of the British government, and desired to be ready for the worst.

He was much troubled at this time by a case of retaliation which he felt bound to insist upon. In April, a Capt. Huddy of New Jersey had been executed by a party of Tories, without any trial. His neighbors and the country generally declared that he was murdered; and Gen. Washington wrote to Sir Henry Clinton, that, unless the officer who headed the party should be given up, he must select a captain from among the British prisoners to suffer death in retaliation for the death of Capt. Huddy. This he did by the advice of a great many officers, and with the full approbation of Congress. Sir Henry Clinton sent back unsatisfactory answers, and finally refused to give up the officer. Then Washington unwillingly ordered a lot to be drawn by the prisoners at Lancaster, Penn. It fell upon

Capt. Asgill, a young man nineteen years old, and an only son. He was very brave and firm, and his companions were extremely angry with Sir Henry Clinton for permitting him to suffer.

There were long delays in the business; and at last some facts came to Washington's knowledge, which led him to advise Capt. Asgill's release. Lady Asgill, his mother, also begged the French government to interfere; and, in November, Congress allowed the prisoner to go to England. The whole affair had been so distressing to Washington, that he ended a letter to Capt. Asgill by saying that the conclusion of it was "not a greater relief" to the prisoner than to himself. He had given orders that Capt. Asgill should always be treated with the greatest kindness; and these orders were everywhere obeyed, for his hard fate excited general sympathy.

Through this summer of 1782, the army was very discontented. Neither officers nor men had received pay for a long time, and were much afraid that they should not get their dues at the end of the war; and there were days when provisions failed. As usual, Washington warmly represented to Congress the distresses and needs of the army.

In August, Sir Guy Carleton informed Gen. Washington that he had received news of a treaty of peace being begun at Paris; but the Commander-in-chief was still cautious, and unwilling to trust to appearances. The fact was, that, in Europe, a general peace had to be made, as France, Spain, and Holland had all been fighting against Great Britain; and it was extremely doubtful if so many nations could be satisfied by any proposals. It was also thought very dishonorable for France and the United States, so long allies, to be in any way separated in making peace.

Count Rochambeau with his army established himself, by Washington's advice, near the American head-quarters at Newburgh, on the Hudson. As before, great friendliness prevailed between the troops; but the American officers had a good deal to bear from their extreme destitution. "Only conceive the mortification they must suffer, even the general officers," wrote Washington, "when they cannot invite a French officer, a visiting friend, or a travelling acquaintance, to a better repast than whiskey, hot from the still, and not always that, and a bit of beef without vegetables, will afford them."

Congress and the Secretary of War might well be moved at the letters Gen. Washington sent them, describing the hardships, the great patience, and at last the strong spirit of discontent, of the army. But what could they do? Money alone would put an end to such troubles; and money the separate States did not supply, and Congress did not know how to get at it.

The gloomy temper of the army was the chief reason which led Gen. Washington to spend the winter of 1782-83 at head-quarters. There was really no military business to be attended to; but he knew that his presence and influence were powerful with both officers and men; and he was so truly attached to those with whom he had long served, that he trusted and hoped no impatient or rebellious act would injure the fame of this much-enduring, patriotic army.

His fears and his precautions were not unreasonable. The idleness of the winter set them all thinking and talking. As they recollected the snowy nights they had spent in marching over the frozen ground, or sleeping in their cold huts; their tedious journeys under summer suns; their labors in digging and building; their want of food; their want of clothes;

the deaths of their comrades in the hospitals or on the field, — they felt bitterly that their countrymen were ungrateful, and that the army deserved better treatment. The officers had something of a recompense in the glory they had won; but they had often been obliged to spend their own money in keeping up the dress and appearance proper for their rank; and they looked forward to a very gloomy future, when they should be old and poor, and perhaps infirm from their wounds.

In March, 1783, a meeting of officers was called by an anonymous paper, which was written with great zeal, and excited all the passions which Gen. Washington was particularly anxious to quiet. He therefore called a meeting on another day; and, before it took place, had conversations with as many officers as possible. When the time came he read an address, which he had carefully prepared. He urged them still to trust to their country's justice, and to preserve the patience and forbearance which had distinguished them hitherto. He spoke in the most affectionate manner, as a true friend, and promised again to support their cause, as he had so often done in past years.

One little circumstance touched the officers very

much. Washington read the first paragraph of this letter ; then stopped and put on spectacles, saying to the listeners, in the simplest manner, that “ he had grown gray in their service, and now found himself growing blind.” Every one was moved ; but they little knew then the number and variety of letters, besides other papers, he wrote. Secretaries, to be sure, could relieve him from the use of his pen ; but he had to *think* for them all. The result of this meeting was, that the officers passed such resolutions as Washington entirely approved.

And thus, by the power of his character, a vast amount of mischief was prevented ; for when men are excited, as these officers were, by real wrongs and sufferings, and come together to discuss them, some hasty words are almost always uttered ; and a quarrel between Congress and the army would have been lamentable indeed, when the war was so nearly at an end.

The Commander-in-chief wrote, at the request of the meeting, a full account of the affairs of the officers to the President of Congress. This trouble, which had been so threatening, in the end did but strengthen the affection which bound together the General and his officers. It is only just to add, that

a proper settlement of accounts was made by Congress.

In April, the long-expected peace was proclaimed. The British immediately began to leave the places they held in the United States; but ships enough were not to be had at short notice. With the troops, many unhappy Tories were obliged to sail away to Nova Scotia.

Congress had no money to pay the soldiers with; but the Commander-in-chief gave leave to many of the men to go home. They left the camp, sometimes alone, sometimes in little parties of neighbors; and there was never any reason for calling them back. They were kindly treated everywhere along the road, and were welcome at their homes. In time, their certificates were turned into money.

The officers were very reluctant to part. The eight years they had spent together had brought about many friendships, and the idea of being scattered over all the thirteen States was truly painful. Gen. Knox, always warm-hearted, proposed to form a society of officers to meet for friendly purposes, and to help the poor among their number. They selected a badge, took the name of the "Society of the Cincinnati," and chose Gen. Washington for their first President.

Before the army was entirely broken up, and Washington resigned his office, he wrote a letter to all the governors of the different States. He spoke of being about to retire to the private life he loved ; and, after dwelling on the goodness of God in bringing the war to such a happy end, described the great advantages of the United States, and the way in which he hoped they would be governed. This letter is one proof among a great many of the difference between Washington and all other generals. He was not solely interested in the military affairs of his country. He cared for a good, honest government. He wanted to see the United States free and happy, and honorable among nations. For his countrymen he had freely risked his life, and his best thoughts were always given to their service.

In June, there was a slight mutiny among some of the Pennsylvania soldiers, who gave a great deal of trouble at Philadelphia. These men had been with the army but a little while, and their misconduct seemed only to set off in brighter light the virtues of Washington's veterans.

In the course of this summer, Gen. Washington made a journey to New York to visit some of the places noted in the war ; such as the spot, near Fish-

kill, where Gen. Burgoyne surrendered; Lake George; and the fort at Ticonderoga, famous for many a battle. In travelling through this State, he was struck with the importance of connecting the Hudson River with the great lakes of the West.*

Early in November, the army was disbanded. Washington's last orders were a congratulation on the termination of the war, thanks for the faithful services men and officers had alike performed, and a prayer for God's blessing on them.

On the 25th of November, Gen. Washington, with the troops who were still to be employed by Congress, entered the city of New York, which had been in the possession of the British for seven years. In a few days, he was ready to go to Annapolis to resign his commission to Congress. The principal officers of the army assembled at a tavern near Whitehall Ferry to take leave of him. When the Commander-in-chief saw all these old companions together, his usual composure of manner failed him. He filled a glass of wine, and, looking at them rather sadly, said: "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you, most devoutly wishing that

* This has since been done by the Erie Canal and by railroads.

your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." Having drunk to these words, he added, "I cannot come to each of you to take my leave, but shall be obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand."

"Gen. Knox, who stood nearest him, was the first to advance. Washington, affected even to tears, grasped his hand, and gave him a brother's embrace. In the same affectionate manner he took leave of the rest. Not a word was spoken." In silence, too, they followed him from the house to the ferry. He entered his barge, and, turning round, took off his hat, and waved to them a last farewell. They returned it, and watched the boat till it was out of sight.

On his way to Annapolis, he stopped to settle his accounts at Philadelphia. You will remember that he had refused to receive any kind of pay. He had kept accurate lists of his expenses; but, in some instances, he had lost his own money by using it for public purposes, and forgetting to put it down in his private account.

As he passed through the towns of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, the scenes of so many

hardships and anxieties, he was everywhere received with enthusiasm. At Annapolis, he gave up his commission to the President of Congress, and made a short but dignified and solemn address. The next day he hastened to Mount Vernon; and Christmas Eve saw him once more "a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac."

For some time after his return home, Washington was almost shut up by the snow and ice of a very severe winter, and must have led a quiet life; but he did not at once lose his habits of business. He expected to hear the camp-noises, and, when he awoke in the morning, would begin to think over the affairs of the day.

As the spring opened, visitors began to pour in upon Mount Vernon. They were cordially received by both Gen. and Mrs. Washington, but without show. "My manner of living," he wrote to a friend, "is plain; and I do not mean to be put out of it. A glass of wine and a bit of mutton are always ready; and such as will be content to partake of them are always welcome. Those who expect more will be disappointed." He was not so rich as before the war, because the country was in so troubled a state, and because his plantations had not produced so much in his absence.

He now employed himself in the care of his estate. He studied the way to improve the land, and took great pains to beautify it with trees and vines ; often planting and transplanting with his own hands. He loved the country, and was truly hospitable ; so that this mode of life seems to have been a very happy one for him, except that he was obliged to write so many letters.

In August, he had again the pleasure of receiving the Marquis de Lafayette, not as before, at a home in camp, but in his own house. During this summer, he also went to the West to examine his lands on the Kenawha and Ohio Rivers. As in New York, he was quite impressed with the desirableness of connecting the Western rivers with those which flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The Western States were then but little settled ; and it was very important that the thirteen States along the coast should have more influence over them than the Spaniards on the Mississippi, or the British at the North.

Washington, always zealous for the prosperity of his country, warmly urged the Legislature of Virginia to take some decided steps in the matter ; and, through his exertions, two companies for opening the navigation of the James and Potomac Rivers

were formed, of both of which he was chosen President. He also wrote a letter to the President of Congress, calling his attention to the same subject.

In the autumn of 1784, Washington and Lafayette—friends so unlike, yet so warmly attached to each other—parted for the third and last time. The General accompanied Lafayette from Mount Vernon to Annapolis to delay the evil hour as long as possible, and thus describes his feelings as he turned back: “In the moment of our separation, upon the road as I travelled, and every hour since, I have felt all that love, respect, and attachment for you, with which length of years, close connection, and your merits have inspired me. I often asked myself, as our carriages separated, whether that was the last sight I ever should have of you; and, though I wished to answer ‘No,’ my fears answered ‘Yes.’”

Washington’s correspondence with the French officers who had been in this country, and with his many friends both in and out of the army, was a great pleasure; but he was teased by many other letters of compliment and of business,—“inquiries,” he says, “which would require the pen of an historian to satisfy.” His time was so engrossed by writ-

ing, that his health began to suffer; and he at last employed a private secretary. This gentleman (a Mr. Lear) said, after living in his family two years, "I have never found a single thing that could lessen my respect for Gen. Washington. A complete knowledge of his honesty, uprightness, and candor, in all his private transactions, has sometimes led me to think him more than a man."

Miss Custis, who was at this time a little child in his house, says of Washington, "I have sometimes made him laugh most heartily from sympathy with my joyous and extravagant spirits; but," she observes, "he was a silent, thoughtful man. He spoke little generally,—never of himself. I never heard him relate a single act of his life during the war. I have often seen him perfectly abstracted, his lips moving; but no sound was perceptible."

Strangers coming to Mount Vernon approached Washington with awe, from knowing the majesty of his character; but they found a quiet country gentleman, most attentive to his guests, and ready to talk about farming, or public affairs, but not of the war. They were often disappointed that he would not "fight his battles o'er again."

But, though Washington was habitually grave, he

could laugh heartily enough when he saw anything droll. There is a story told of two judges coming to see him at Mount Vernon, who travelled on horse-back, and, finding themselves very dusty, stopped in a wood, just on the edge of his estate, to dress themselves before appearing at the house. They quickly pulled off their travelling-suits, while a servant unlocked their large portmanteau. Out flew cakes of Windsor soap, and all sorts of articles which peddlers sell; but their clothes were not to be seen. Their trunk had been exchanged for that of a Scotch peddler at the last inn where they stopped. The judges could not help laughing at their own condition and the blank face of the negro servant. Washington, hearing the noise, came up, and was so overcome by the strange appearance of his friends and the drollness of the scene, that he is said to have rolled on the grass with laughter.

Col. Henry Lee, of Virginia, was a frequent guest at Mount Vernon, and was not at all restrained by reverence for Washington. There can be no doubt that the General enjoyed other peoples' good spirits, if he were not gay himself. He was fond of dancing as late as the middle of the war; for Gen. Greene writes from Middlebrook, in 1779, "We had a little

dance at my quarters. His Excellency and Mrs. Greene danced * upwards of three hours, without once sitting down. Upon the whole, we had a pretty little frisk."

Washington could not bear to check the liveliness of young persons. He would leave the room, and keep himself out of sight, rather than prevent their talking and laughing. A story is told of him at Morristown, which shows how, in his high position, he kept the same rule of thinking of others which he laid down for himself in his boyhood. He was present at a religious meeting in the open air. A chair had been placed for him. Just before the service began, a woman, with a child in her arms, drew near. The Commander-in-chief immediately gave her his own seat, and stood during the whole service.

In the summer of 1786, Washington lost one of his dearest friends,—Gen. Greene, who died suddenly at Savannah. They had many qualities alike; and Greene's brave, cheerful, faithful spirit had won Washington's strong affection. They had shared anxieties, cares, hardships, and labors; they looked

* Do you think they were dancing the Lancers?

forward to enjoying together the peace and prosperity of the country they both loved so well : but death released Gen. Greene from many cares which were still to trouble his beloved friend.

His happy life at Mount Vernon could never withdraw Washington's thoughts from the state of the nation. He was by no means satisfied. The government was feeble, and very poor ; trade did not revive, as was expected, at the end of the war ; the national debt was not paid ; the separate States were jealous of each other ; and, in the autumn of 1786, there was a rebellion in Massachusetts.

Washington's numerous correspondents wrote to him very gloomily, and he could not return cheerful answers. To Gen. Knox he wrote : " I feel, my dear Gen. Knox, infinitely more than I can express to you, for the disorders which have arisen in these States. Good God ! who, besides a Tory, could have foreseen, or a Briton predicted them ? I do assure you, that even at this moment, when I reflect upon the present prospect of our affairs, it seems to me to be like the vision of a dream." And in another letter he says : " It was but the other day that we were shedding our blood to obtain the constitutions under which we now live, — constitutions

of our own choice and making; and now we are unsheathing the sword to overturn them!"

A plan was formed for delegates from all the States to meet in Philadelphia, in the spring of 1787, to endeavor to correct the weaknesses and defects of the system of government. Gen. Washington refused to be a delegate; but the State of Virginia absolutely insisted on his services. He had declared publicly and solemnly, at the end of the war, that his future life would be strictly private, and he was unwilling to appear changeable; but he was so strongly urged to give the weight of his character and influence to this Convention, that he felt it his duty to go.

He was chosen President of the Convention.* The debates were long and interesting; a vast amount of business was accomplished; and, after four months of labor, the delegates agreed upon the form of government under which we live,—the Constitution of the United States. It was afterwards altered a little; but, in substance, the government framed for the thirteen old States still holds together more than thirty.

* Being determined, as usual, to understand the business, Washington studied all the governments under which there are separate States.

The Constitution was probably not entirely satisfactory to any man engaged in making it ; but it was the best thing they could all agree upon. Of course, all the States were eager for their own interests ; but each one was obliged to give way on certain points. Col. Alexander Hamilton, Gen. Washington's former aid, distinguished himself much in this Convention. The Constitution was offered to the States, to be by them accepted or refused.

Washington returned to Mount Vernon in a much happier frame of mind than when he left it. Not that he thought the work perfect ; but it was better than he had feared it might be, and he thought it contained the great principles necessary for the good government of the United States. He was quite aware that many people would be dissatisfied with it ; he did not expect all his own friends to agree with him ; but he hoped, and, above all, he trusted in God, who had brought his country out of many troubles.

In the course of the next year, eleven States accepted the Constitution. The next thing was to choose a President. The whole nation turned to Washington. His friends from every part of the country wrote to him that he was the man to begin

the new government; that he alone could quiet all discords, unite all opinions, and give to the country its much-needed repose and happiness.

All this honor and respect, this call from a nation's voice, could not rouse one spark of vanity or exultation in Washington. To his friends he expressed only regret at leaving home, and unwillingness to take up the burden of public life. For instance, to Mr. Hamilton he wrote: "You know me well enough, my good sir, to be persuaded that I am not guilty of affectation when I tell you that it is my great and sole desire to live and die in peace and retirement on my own farm. . . . Still, I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain, what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an *honest man*." And again, later: "In taking a survey of the subject, in whatever point of light I have been able to place it, I have always felt a kind of gloom upon my mind as often as I have been taught to expect I might, and perhaps must ere long, be called to make a decision." And in a letter to Col. Trumbull: "I believe you know me sufficiently well, my dear Trumbull, to conceive that I am very much perplexed and distressed in my own mind respecting the subject to which you allude.

. . . . May Heaven assist me in forming a judgment ! for, at present, I see nothing but clouds and darkness before me." In another letter : "After all, if I should conceive myself in a manner constrained to accept, I call Heaven to witness that this act would be the greatest sacrifice of my personal feelings and wishes that ever I have been called upon to make."

Gen. Washington was, of course, cautious in writing on this subject, as he did not choose to take it for granted that he should be elected. He sincerely hoped that some other person, as able and more willing to serve, might be chosen ; but there was no such man in the United States ; and gradually the letters of public men convinced him that it was his duty to undertake the office. Gov. Johnson, of Maryland, seems to have said all in a few words : "We cannot, sir, do without you ; and I and thousands more can explain to anybody but yourself why we cannot do without you."

The election for President and Vice-President did not take place until January, 1789 ; and, by that time, Gen. Washington had decided to accept the office. He received the vote of all the States. Mr. John Adams, of Massachusetts, was the Vice-President.

On the 16th of April, 1789, he left Mount Vernon * to go to New York. In his Diary he wrote: "About ten o'clock, I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York, with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

This is not the common way of receiving the greatest honor that *a nation* has to give. Washington knew that he was looked upon, in the United States and in Europe, as the protector of his country. He had been told, over and over again, of the gratitude of his countrymen at the end of the war: and now they had put their trust in him to guide their new government; and yet he was so truly humble, that he doubted if he could discharge well his new and important duties. Men are usually more ready to believe the praise they hear.

His journey was one continued triumph. He was everywhere met by magistrates and processions;

* Before quitting home, he paid a last visit to his mother, who was ill, and not likely to recover.

citizens and old soldiers poured forth to see him ; bells were rung, cannon fired, addresses made ; and especially in New Jersey, where he had endured so many trials, all was now joy and welcome.

At the New York Ferry, a splendid barge was prepared for him. All the vessels in the harbor were gayly dressed with flags. He landed amid salutes of cannon, ringing of bells, and the shouts of the crowd. At the pier stood Gen. Knox, with Gov. Clinton, — “true and tried” friends of the Revolutionary days. A long train of persons followed him as he walked to the house prepared for him.

On the 30th of April, 1789, Washington took the solemn oath to perform the duties of the President of the United States. The Senate, House of Representatives, and Vice-President, were assembled in the Senate Chamber of New York. In front of the room was a large balcony, in which a table had been placed. On the table lay a Bible. An immense multitude filled the streets, and the windows and roofs of the neighboring houses. Every eye was fixed on Washington as he appeared on the balcony, accompanied by many distinguished persons. He came to the front of the balcony, and bowed several times in answer to the shouts which

greeted him, and then drew back to an arm-chair which stood near the table. The people saw that he was overcome, and became perfectly still. "After a few moments, Washington rose, and again came forward. John Adams, the Vice-President, stood on his right; on his left, the Chancellor* of the State of New York; behind him, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Alexander Hamilton, Generals Knox and St. Clair, the Baron Steuben, and others. The oath was read by the Chancellor, slowly and distinctly; Washington, at the same time, laying his hand on the open Bible. When it was concluded, he replied solemnly, 'I swear; so help me, God!' He then bowed down reverently, and kissed the Bible.

"The Chancellor now stepped forward, waved his hand, and exclaimed, 'Long live George Washington, President of the United States!' At this moment a flag was displayed on the cupola of the hall, which was the signal for a discharge of artillery, and a joyful peal from all the bells in the city. Shouts again filled the air."

Washington, after bowing again to the people, returned into the Senate Chamber, and addressed

* The judge of one of the courts in New York.

the Senators and Representatives of the United States. His voice was "deep, slightly tremulous, and so low as to demand close attention in the listeners." After the address, the whole body went on foot to St. Paul's Church, where prayers were read. The day was given up to rejoicings; and in the evening there were illuminations and fire-works.

Perhaps you will like to know, that, on this important occasion, Washington was dressed in a suit of dark-brown cloth of American manufacture. He wore white-silk stockings* and silver shoe-buckles, and a steel-hilted sword. His hair was powdered, and tied behind, according to the fashion of that time.

President Washington entered upon his new duties with the most sincere distrust of his own powers. To a friend he wrote: "I greatly apprehend that my countrymen will expect too much from me. . . . I feel, in the execution of the duties of my arduous office, how much I shall stand in need of the countenance and aid of every friend to

* Pantaloon were not then worn. The cloth breeches joined the stockings just below the knee.

myself, of every friend to the Revolution, and of every lover of good government. I thank you, my dear sir, for your affectionate expression on this point."

He employed the leisure which he had for the first few weeks after his arrival in New York in studying the records of all that had passed between the United States and foreign governments since the treaty of peace with Great Britain in 1783. His office of President was an entirely new one in the world, and he was anxious to take the first steps with propriety and dignity. But, just because it was a new office, he was peculiarly exposed to criticism. Some people were afraid he behaved too much like a king; which was a most unpleasant idea to all Americans, and particularly so to Washington.

It was very soon necessary to establish some rules for receiving company. Visitors came all day long, and the President had hardly time to eat his dinner. After consulting several of his friends, he decided to receive company twice a week, — once with Mrs. Washington, and once alone. He invited foreign ministers, senators and representatives, and distinguished strangers, to dine

with him occasionally; but accepted no invitations, and made no visits. People who came on business saw the President by appointment, or at the hours given up to business; but it was impossible for him to be interrupted at every moment; for he had an enormous number of letters and despatches* to read and answer.

As to expenses, he had, as before, refused to receive any compensation. The salary of the President was fixed by law at twenty-five thousand dollars. It was supposed that he would be obliged to spend the whole of this sum. His style of living was simple; and Mrs. Washington entirely agreed with him "as to simplicity of dress, and everything which can tend to support propriety of character, without partaking of the follies of luxury and ostentation."

In the course of the summer, Congress divided the business of the nation into departments; and the President appointed Mr. Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, Secretary of State. He was to manage the intercourse of the United States with other nations. He appointed Mr. Alexander Hamilton

* A letter, or package of letters, on public business.

Secretary of the Treasury. His business related to money, — to collecting it, and paying it out. Gen. Knox, of Massachusetts, was continued in the office of Secretary of War, and had the very small navy as well as the army under his control. Mr. Edmund Randolph, of Virginia, a distinguished lawyer, was the Attorney-General. These gentlemen formed the President's Cabinet, as it is called; and the people hoped much from their new government, when they saw men of so great talent engaged in its service.

The President also appointed Mr. John Jay, of New York, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. He considered this perhaps the most important choice he was called upon to make, and he was fully satisfied when Mr. Jay accepted the office.

The power of appointment to offices gave the President much trouble. He was determined to find, if possible, the best man for every place; but he was sorry to refuse the many claimants, who urged some reason of friendship, or their father's military services to the country. He had resolved, before taking office, not to be bound to any one, — not even to his nearest friends, — but to do precisely what he judged best for the public.

During the summer, President Washington had a long and severe illness ; and, in October, he was glad to leave New York for about a month's journey in the New England States. He travelled in his own carriage, and went by way of New Haven, Hartford, Worcester, Boston, Salem, and Newburyport, to Portsmouth in New Hampshire. He was everywhere received with the greatest respect and affection. Old people and young, soldiers and citizens, the learned and the ignorant, were alike eager to see him. Addresses were presented to him, military escorts accompanied him, and the magistrates of towns came out to meet him. The President could not fail to be pleased with all this enthusiasm. He looked upon it, not only as showing affection for himself, but as a sign of good-will to the new government. He was also glad to see the country so flourishing.

This was his third visit to Boston. The first time, he came to consult Gov. Shirley, in 1756 : he was then a gallant young officer, already known by the part he had played at Braddock's defeat. His second visit was in July, 1775, to take command of the poor, straggling patriot army encamped upon the hills : the grave and anxious but determined Com-

mander-in-chief was then actually in the town for but a few days after the evacuation by the British. And now, in 1789, he came as the Chief Magistrate of the country to whose service he had devoted his youth and his manhood, crowned with the honor of a peace which he had won, but resigning his own wishes, and taking up again the burden of public cares.

Among other public bodies, the Cincinnati of Massachusetts came together to welcome their chief; and he rejoiced in the opportunity to meet his old friends again.*

In a letter written to a Scotch lady after his return, the President says: "I have lately made a tour through the Eastern States. I found the country in a great degree recovered from the ravages of war, the towns flourishing, and the people delighted with a government instituted by themselves, and for their own good."

In the autumn of this year (1789), Washington's mother died, at the age of eighty-two. Her lot was

* A ball was given to President Washington at Concert Hall, formerly in Court Street. Many ladies wore the letters "G. W.," and an eagle embroidered on some part of their dress, perhaps on a sash or bow of ribbon.

a rare one. She lived to see her son illustrious, with a spotless fame, and as much admired for the purity of his character as for his great acts ; but it is said that she used to listen to praise of him in silence, and once answered : “ Yes, George was always a good boy.”

When Congress met again, in 1790, Mr. Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, proposed a plan for paying the debts of the United States. This caused great discussion. People of the North and the South disagreed, the feelings of the different States were roused, and it seemed as if nothing would be done. But, at last, the Secretary’s proposal carried the day.

Another subject of importance was the choice of a place for the capital of the whole country. It was at length determined that Congress should meet for the next ten years at Philadelphia ; and, during that time, some spot on the Potomac River should be selected. The President had a good deal of trouble with this business ; but it is pleasant to remember that he fixed upon the place for the city which bears his name. People objected, at this time, to New York and Philadelphia, as being too far to the east and north, and not central enough for a seat of

government. How little they imagined, that, in sixty years, senators and representatives would travel from California to the banks of the Potomac!

In the summer of 1790, the President made a little trip to Rhode Island, which had joined the Union since his former visit to the Eastern States.

At this time, the President heard much of the dissatisfaction of the Virginians. The question of the debts had embittered them; and, with a very common party-spirit, they grumbled about little matters as well as large. In answer to some rumors about the pomp of his parties, and his bows being stiffer than those of the King of England, the President wrote: "That I have not been able to make bows to the taste of poor Col. B. (who, by the by, I believe, never saw one of them), is to be regretted; especially, too, as on those occasions they were indiscriminately bestowed, and the best I was master of. Would it not have been better to throw the veil of charity over them, ascribing their stiffness to the effects of age or to the unskilfulness of my teacher, rather than to pride and dignity of office, which, God knows, has no charms for me? For I can truly say, I had rather be at Mount Vernon, with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of

government by the officers of state, and the representatives of every power in Europe."

So much business and so much company seem, at all events, to have been more than the President's health could bear. He had another severe illness this year, and was truly thankful when a recess of Congress allowed him to retire to Mount Vernon for a refreshing autumn visit. He could not entirely leave business behind him; but he enjoyed a more active life than he could possibly lead in New York.

There were still some points of difficulty between Great Britain and the United States. It was suspected that British influence stirred up the Indians living northwest of the Ohio River, who were very troublesome to the inhabitants of the frontiers. With Spain, also, there was great danger of a serious difficulty, because she owned Florida and Louisiana, and discouraged the trade down the Mississippi, which the Western people were quite bent upon having. The President thought over all such matters with great care and attention, and was specially cautious about every step he took, because he believed *a good beginning* to be very important for a new government.

In December, 1790, Congress met at Philadelphia,

and the President also fixed his residence there. A new house, therefore, had to be chosen for him ; and he gave directions that it should not be a showy one. At the end of a letter to Mr. Lear on this subject, he says, "I had rather have heard that my repaired coach was plain and elegant, than rich and elegant."

The most important subjects before Congress this winter were, as usual, carefully considered by the President ; but he could not be indifferent to the party-spirit which ran high all over the country. The people who wanted to strengthen the general government were called Federalists : those who would have been glad to see the rights of the separate States still more marked than they were, were called Republicans, or Democrats. The Democrats sympathized with France ; the Federalists, rather more with England. The President, of course, did not belong to either party, and the only thing in which they agreed was respect for him ; but on every subject like taxes, trade, or a bank, opinions were divided.

In the recess of this spring, President Washington travelled through the Southern States. He was received with the same affectionate respect that had met him in other parts of the Union. Opposition to

government, and dislike to any or all of the secretaries, disappeared in his presence ; and every one was eager to see the admired general and the disinterested patriot. He deserved to be called the Father of his Country.

He was well pleased with what he saw of the Southern States, and with the spirit of the people towards the new government. He wrote after his return : " Industry has there taken place of idleness, and economy of dissipation. Two or three years of good crops, and a ready market for the produce of their lands, have put every one in good-humor ; and, in some instances, they even impute to the government what is due only to the goodness of Providence."

It is remarkable, that, during this journey of the President, no delay or accident ever happened. He was absent three months, and travelled eighteen hundred and eighty-seven miles with the same horses. Before he left home, he had calculated distances, and had made up his mind where he would stop, and how long. He was probably quite pleased that he was able to be so exactly punctual.

During the summer of 1791, a war was begun with the Indians northwest of the Ohio. President

Washington was exceedingly sorry for it. He always wished to treat the Indians in a mild and humane way; but there had been threatenings of trouble for a long time, and he was not surprised when it became necessary to send troops to that part of the country. The war was long, expensive, and, at first, anything but successful.

In the winter of 1791 – 92, one of the most important subjects before Congress was the raising and drilling of national militia; and the matter became much more interesting when the disasters and defeats of the first Indian campaign were known.

In January, 1792, the first minister* was sent from this country to Great Britain. Mr. Thomas Pinckney, of South Carolina, was selected. It was a very hard thing for the King of England to receive an ambassador from a people whom he had long considered his own subjects.

You must not imagine that President Washington's occupation in public affairs prevented his thinking of and writing to his friends. By his order and

* A minister from one country to another makes agreements of all sorts about trade, or anything else that is important. When two nations make war, the ministers are sent home.

industry, he still found time to write letters to Lafayette, who was now a man of great importance in France. The President kept him informed of what was going on here, and in a letter dated June, 1792, wrote: "The affairs of the United States still go on in a prosperous train. We increase daily in numbers and riches, and the people are blessed with the enjoyment of those rights which alone can give security and happiness to a nation. . . . Hamilton, Knox, Jay, and Jefferson are well, and remember you with affection."

The party-spirit of Americans has been before spoken of as a cause of trouble to the President. It reached even his Cabinet. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Jefferson disagreed on almost every point of government. What one feared as a danger, the other believed to be a great blessing; what one thought a merit in the Constitution of the United States, the other considered a fault. When people disagree all the time, their tempers almost always become irritated: they begin to find fault with each other's actions, as well as opinions. So it was with these two gentlemen: their dislike amounted to a quarrel. In one thing only they agreed, and that was attachment to President Washington.

He made repeated efforts to reconcile them. In August, 1792, he sent them both a letter, in which he recommended, in general terms, union among the members of government, and a disposition to work together, and to disregard trifles. In reply to their answers, he spoke more particularly to them; assured them that he believed they were both patriotic in their views; urged that, on such subjects, the best men might reasonably differ; and begged them to judge each other more gently. It was all in vain: his calm reasoning did not prevail against their passions.

This quarrel, however, did not prevent their discharging faithfully the duties of their offices; nor did it interfere with their urging the President most eagerly to allow himself to be re-elected. He had hoped, and at one time determined, to retire at the end of the first four years. So many persons, however, entreated him still to serve his country, that he was at last convinced that it was his duty to continue in office.

Very soon after the President took his second oath of office, the news of a most important event reached this country, and proved to every lover of peace and safety that his re-election had been the

greatest possible blessing to the United States. France and Great Britain were again at war. A bloody revolution was going on in France. At first, Lafayette and many other good men had hoped that a free government might be established; but, as months passed by, the worst people rose to power; horrible cruelties were committed, and the name of Liberty was used only as a cover for crimes.

So many French officers had served in this country, and had gone home enthusiastic for freedom, so many Americans believed that the government of their own country would be the best for all the world, that much sympathy had been felt for the French people. Even the President, with all his prudence, had looked hopefully upon the beginning of the great change. But, in this year (1793), the true character of the Revolution began to appear to his watchful eyes. He saw that there was no real government; that disorder and tumult reigned at Paris. He also foresaw that the French leaders would call upon the people of the United States to join them in a war against Great Britain; that they would appeal to American gratitude, and would easily excite all the unthinking. After solemn deliberation with his Cabinet, he decided to take no

part in the war. Every American owes him and the Secretaries the warmest gratitude for the decision which has kept us aloof from the constant wars of Europe. It would seem that the Atlantic Océan, which rolls between us and Europe, might have taught us that neutrality* was our lot among the nations; yet any other President than Washington might have easily entangled us in an alliance with France, and then we should have gone on joining in one war after another.

But this decision, which seems now so wise and so simple, was hardly approved at the time. People's passions were excited. Love of France and freedom, and the lingering dislike to England, made many men indignant at the part taken by the President. The newspapers were violent. For the first time, the President's personal character was attacked. Those who had always been opposed to his *government* now showed themselves enemies to *himself*. What he felt may be judged from this passage in a letter to Gov. Lee, of Virginia ("Light-horse Harry" in the war): "But in what will this

* The state of taking no part in a dispute, being on neither side.

abuse terminate? For the result, as it respects myself, I care not; for I have a consolation within, that no earthly efforts can deprive me of; and that is, that neither ambitious nor interested motives have influenced my conduct."

The behavior of a new French minister, who arrived in this country in the spring of 1793, caused the President still more trouble. This was Mr. Genet, who landed at Charleston, and was received with great enthusiasm. Public meetings were held, at which an unbounded love and sympathy for France were expressed. He expected an equally warm reception from the President. He was disappointed. Washington expressed a cordial friendship and sincere gratitude to the French people, but made it plain that he had no idea of suffering this country to be drawn into the war.

Soon Mr. Genet began to arm and send out vessels from our seaport towns to attack British vessels. This could not be allowed while the United States remained *neutral*. When the French minister was told that he must put an end to all such doings, he flew into a violent rage, and used, both in writing and in talking, most improper language about the government. He declared that he would

appeal from the President to the people. This was the most odious thing he could have said in America, where the President represents the people, and is, in truth, their servant ; or, as Washington said, "if they were to go further, and call me their slave, during this period, I would not dispute the point."

After some months, Mr. Genet's insults to government became so offensive, that men's eyes were opened : they saw that he was entirely in the wrong. It was necessary for the President to maintain his own and the nation's dignity. He had waited patiently ; but at last he sent to Paris the very unusual request, that Mr. Genet might be recalled. It required some courage to make this demand, of course unwelcome to France, and very displeasing to so many Americans ; but all ended well. A new minister was sent, who treated the President with perfect respect and politeness.

In the mean time, Genet's popularity and loud talking had attracted the attention of the British minister. He had many complaints to bring forward concerning the temper and spirit shown both by the speaker and his hearers. He also called the attention of government to the fact that a British trading-vessel had been captured by a French frigate within

the Capes of the Delaware. There was also another cause of ill-feeling between this country and Great Britain. American sailors complained that they were taken out of merchant-ships, and compelled to serve in men-of-war, under pretence that they were Englishmen. The British captains of men-of-war probably sometimes made mistakes from the resemblance in language and looks, but when they wanted men they would not be likely to be very careful to find out that a man was certainly born in Britain.

Though the discontent on this subject increased, the President, instead of declaring war, sent Mr. Jay to London, to endeavor to settle peacefully these and some other questions. He was fortunate in having so wise a man to send, but the measure was not popular. It did not suit excited minds.

On the 1st of January, 1794, Mr. Jefferson, Secretary of State, resigned his office. He and the President exchanged good wishes and thanks for past services. One good result had followed from Mr. Genet's violence. Mr. Jefferson, though known as the head of the Democratic party, and attached to France, had publicly expressed his disapproval of his conduct.

In August, 1794, the usual peace and quiet within

the United States were disturbed by a strange outbreak in the western part of Pennsylvania. About three years before, a tax had been laid on distilled spirits. It was very unpopular in that region of the country ; and, for some time, there had been complainings : but, during this summer, the people broke out into open violence. They refused to obey the sheriffs, and took up arms. Militia were collected in large bodies from the eastern part of Pennsylvania and from the neighboring States. The President inspected them, and had some thoughts of crossing the mountains with them ; but that seemed to be an unnecessary exertion, and he returned to Philadelphia to meet Congress.

The insurrection was put down without bloodshed ; in truth, the discontented had no real wrong to complain of. The President looked upon it as a proof of the excitement of the whole nation : he also thought these misguided people had been stirred up by Jacobin societies. These were clubs formed to watch the government, it was said ; but, under pretence of watching, they only abused it. They imitated French clubs, and used most passionate language. Washington had always disapproved of them, even before the Constitution was adopted.

At the end of this year, Mr. Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, and Gen. Knox, Secretary of War, both resigned their offices. In losing them from among his advisers, the President missed tried and faithful friends. Their salaries were so small, that they both thought it necessary, for the sake of their families, to employ themselves in some other way.

In March, 1795, came intelligence of a treaty * with Great Britain. It was the best Mr. Jay could obtain, but not quite as good as the President had hoped it might be. After a careful study of it, however, he was satisfied to sign it; but, as soon as it was known to the public, a perfect storm of passion and abuse burst forth. It was said that England had all the advantages; and the friends of France rose up again with fresh zeal, and horribly bad temper. The President was not spared by their unbridled tongues. He was annoyed by the addresses which poured in upon him; but you know him well enough, by this time, to feel certain that no harsh or false words would ever move him one hair's breadth from that line of action which he deemed useful to his country.

* A treaty is an agreement between nations. It is often for the purpose of making peace, but it may relate to trade.

In the autumn of 1795, there arrived in this country George Washington Lafayette, the son of the Marquis, who had been for a long time imprisoned. The President had been extremely anxious about him ; had sent money to his wife ; and had offered to provide for this son, his namesake. He immediately began to pay the expenses of the boy's education.

In the year 1795, our intercourse with foreign nations was improved. Treaties were made with Spain and with Algiers. America began to take a proper place in the world. The President had always been extremely anxious to keep this country independent of others, and was pleased to see that his efforts for this purpose had been crowned with success. In a letter on this most interesting subject, he says, "In a word, I want an *American* character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for *ourselves*, and not for others."

In 1796, the treaty with Great Britain was again discussed by Congress with the same passion and abuse as before. The President was asked to show certain papers relating to it, which he declined to do ; proving once more that he would choose what he thought the *right*, rather than the popular course.

In May of this year, President Washington, as a last effort to obtain the release of his friend Lafayette, wrote a letter to the Emperor of Germany, in which he spoke of his own friendship for the Marquis ; of the gratitude of all Americans to him ; of his severe sufferings ; and finally requested that he might be permitted to come to this country. It is not known whether this letter had any effect or not in making Lafayette's captivity milder or shorter. He was released in the year 1797, but did not visit this country again until 1825. The President had, before this time, tried to intercede for his friend by means of the ministers of the United States in other countries ; but he had not been able to effect much, for fear of involving the nation.

No sooner was the American excitement about the treaty a little subdued, than a French one began. The French government complained of it. The President took great pains to satisfy our former ally ; but, before many months had passed, he was forced to admit that her conduct was, according to his ideas of it, "outrageous beyond conception ; not to be warranted by her treaty with us, by the law of nations, by any principles of justice, or even by a regard to decent appearances." France, on account of her

former aid, expected to influence the United States in every important action.

In September, 1796, as the President had decided not to be elected again, he published his Farewell Address to the People of the United States. It contains his advice to all Americans,—to us at the present day, as well as to those who were then alive. He advises us to be peaceable and honest towards all other nations, good-humored and brotherly among ourselves. He speaks of our great prospects of prosperity and happiness, but admonishes us to gain for ourselves the character which makes a good use of happiness.

You have been often told of Washington's remarkable modesty. Perhaps there are few more striking proofs of it than these words, in which he speaks of his own services as President: "Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and, every day, the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome."

This address was received with great respect in

all the States. Love and admiration for Washington lay really too deep in the hearts of the people to be uprooted by any storms of party passion, or by enthusiasm for France.

Mr. John Adams, of Massachusetts, was chosen President; and Mr. Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, Vice-President. The election, and the threatening troubles with France, occupied public attention during the winter of 1796-97.

As the month of March drew nigh, the President looked forward joyfully to the day which should release him from office, and permit him to go *home* to Mount Vernon. Before that time, however, he wrote a letter to the Secretary of State, solemnly declaring that certain letters published as his in 1777 were forgeries. They were then printed by the British to show that he was not the patriot general he appeared. In 1796, they were reprinted by some enemy of the President, who fancied he could attack the purity of such a character. It is not known who wrote them; but there were some particulars of Gen. Washington's private affairs correctly told. These gave the whole a natural air, and may perhaps have led some foolish persons into the mistake of believing they could be true.

The President also wrote a few affectionate farewell letters to those friends who had been with him in public life. To Gen. Knox he says, "Although the prospect of retirement is most grateful to my soul, and I have not a wish to mix again in the great world, or to partake in its politics, yet I am not without my regrets at parting with (perhaps never more to meet) the few intimates whom I love; and among these, be assured, you are one."

"On the day before President Washington retired from office, a large company dined with him. Among them were the foreign ministers and their ladies, Mr. and Mrs. Adams, Mr. Jefferson, and other conspicuous persons of both sexes. During the dinner, much hilarity prevailed; but, on the removal of the cloth, it was put an end to by the President, certainly without design. Having filled his glass, he addressed the company, with a smile, in the following or similar words: 'Ladies and gentlemen, this is the last time I shall drink your health as a public man. I do it with sincerity, wishing you all possible happiness.' There was an end of all pleasantry." Bishop White, who tells this story, happened to look at the wife of the British minister, Mrs. Liston, and saw tears running down her cheeks.

On the 4th of March, Washington with great pleasure saw the oath taken by Mr. Adams; and, when he had paid his respects to the new President, he gladly left Philadelphia for Mount Vernon. Before his departure, the citizens of Philadelphia gave him a public banquet, at which they spared neither pains nor expense to do him honor.

He tried in vain to make his homeward journey a private one. People would not lose the opportunity of expressing their gratitude and love; and, for some time after his arrival at Mount Vernon, letters and addresses poured in upon him, just as they did after the war.

He immediately took up again his former course of life, and began to repair his buildings, to improve his farm, and to arrange his very important public papers. No wish for power, or regret at being no longer before the eyes of the world, ever disturbed the happiness of his retirement. Mrs. Washington's grandchildren lived with him, and other relations were often at Mount Vernon.

Washington was extremely kind to his nephews: he had helped many of them to be educated, and was uniformly kind to their wives and children. Besides his own and Mrs. Washington's property,

he had to take care of several estates belonging to children and widows, which had been left in his charge. He has described his own life in a letter to Mr. M'Henry, dated May, 1797:—

“Dear Sir,—I am indebted to you for several unacknowledged letters. But never mind that: go on as if you had answers. You are at the source of information, and can find many things to relate; while I have nothing to say that could either inform or amuse a Secretary of War in Philadelphia. I might tell him that I begin my diurnal* course with the sun; that, if my hirelings are not in their places at that time, I send them messages of sorrow for their indisposition; that, having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things further; that, the more they are probed, the deeper I find the wounds which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years; that, by the time I have accomplished these matters, breakfast (a little after seven o'clock) is ready; that, this being over, I mount my horse, and ride round my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces,—come, as they say, out of respect for me.

* Daily.

Pray, would not the word 'curiosity' answer as well? And how different this from having a few social friends at a cheerful board! The usual time of sitting at table, a walk, and tea, bring me within the dawn of candle-light; previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve that I will retire to my writing-table, and acknowledge the letters I have received; but, when the lights are brought, I feel tired and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as well. The next night comes, and with it the same causes for postponement; and so on.

"This will account for your letter having remained so long unacknowledged; and, having given you the history of a day, it will serve for a year; and I am persuaded you will not require a second edition of it."

But it did not serve for as many years as Washington hoped it might.

In 1798, our government felt it necessary to prepare for war with France. In July, 1798, President Adams appointed Gen. Washington Commander-in-chief of all the American armies. He was so urged and entreated to take the office, that he consented once more to give his time and strength to his country.

It was no light task to form and arrange a new army. The officers who had served in the Revolutionary war naturally expected high rank; but Gen. Washington was not in favor of employing many of them. He thought that the whole system of fighting ought to be quite different from that pursued against the British. He wished the French never to be allowed to land on the coast; and therefore he desired to have quick marches, and brilliant, dashing attacks. For such service, he considered young officers better suited than old ones.

He was perfectly beset by applicants for rank in the new army, who either wrote to him, or came to Mount Vernon to see him; and his correspondence became as enormous as in former years. Col. Hamilton was appointed a major-general, and his suggestions were always gladly received by the Commander-in-chief.

Preparations went on, and the thoughts of all patriots turned anxiously to Europe; but in December, 1799, war had not been declared.

On the 12th of December, Gen. Washington, while taking his usual ride on horseback, was exposed to very bad weather, — rain, hail, and snow, with a cold wind blowing. The next day his family

observed that he had a slight cold; but he took no notice of such trifling ailments.

The day after (the 14th of December), before it was light in the morning, he had so bad a sore-throat that he breathed with difficulty, and could hardly speak. Through the day he suffered much, and the physicians could do nothing to relieve him. His mind was perfectly clear, and he believed he should not recover. He gave his will to Mrs. Washington, left a few directions with his private secretary, and asked him if he could mention anything important to be done. In spite of his difficulty in speaking, he thanked all those who tried to make him more comfortable. He also expressed his perfect willingness to die. Between ten and eleven o'clock at night, he drew his last breath. His spirit returned to God, who gave it, and who granted to America Washington's spotless life and noble example.

The mourning for his death spread over the whole nation. Congress and the President received the news with sincere sorrow; and the people felt that they had lost their protector, the Father of his Country. Other nations also expressed publicly their reverence for his character and admiration for his career.

Very few men have had the opportunities of serving their country at such important times in her history; none have left a fame so free from stain. Glory, admiration, honor, and power never led him from his straight course of modesty and uprightness. How could he thus resist temptation? How did he succeed in controlling his passions?

There is but one answer. Washington was a religious man. He trusted in God, and was brave and hopeful, when all was dark around him. He served God, and was faithful and true when he stood in high places.

It is not any single talent which makes Washington great, but his *character*. Wisdom and self-control fitted him to command others. No prejudice, no wish or dislike of his own, ever prevented his putting a man into the place where he could be most useful to his country. His mind and his heart were full of large ideas, always striving for the good of the whole nation, and no smaller object was allowed to interfere with them. The longer you live, the more you will value this broad, high, noble character. It is the rarest in the world.

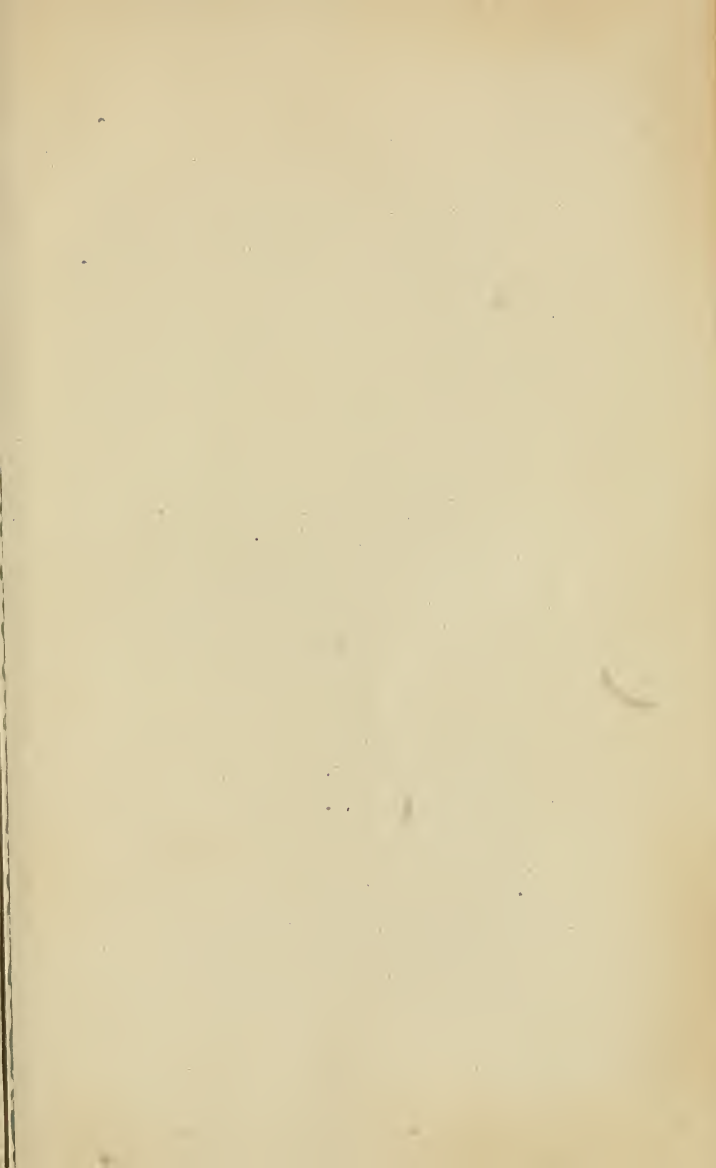
Though so singularly free from bad passions, such as envy, jealousy, and selfish ambition, Washington

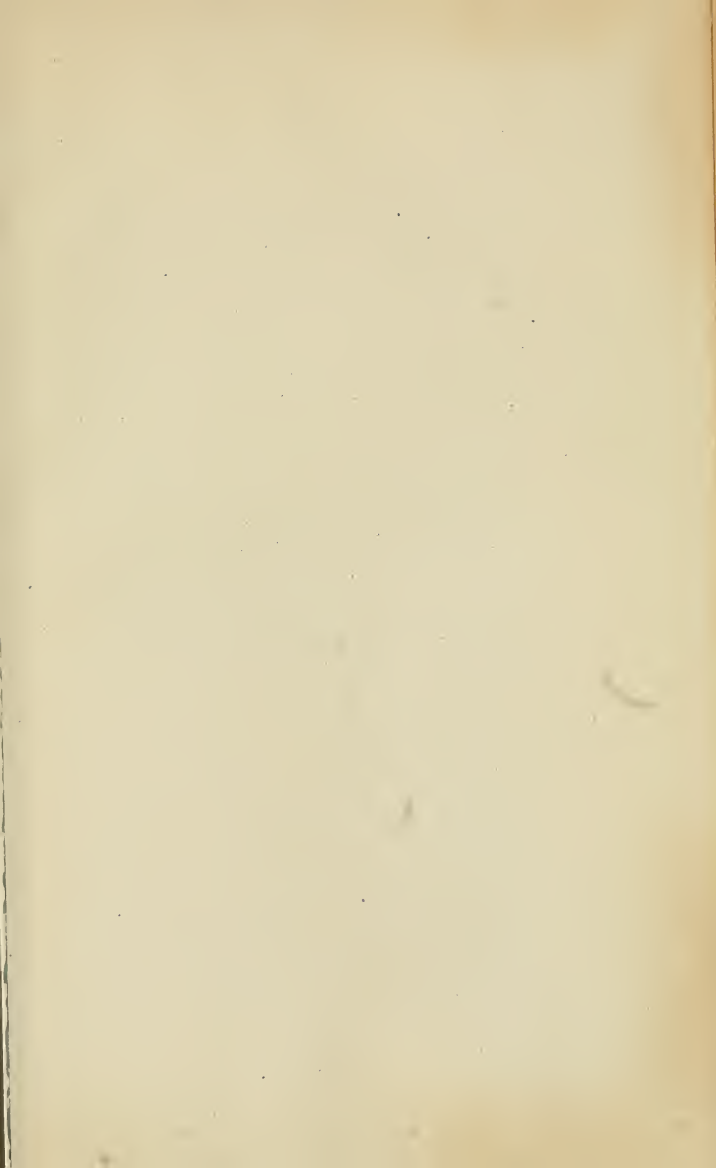
was by no means cold-hearted or indifferent. You have seen, from his earliest to his last campaign, how much he cared for his soldiers; you know what a warm, constant friend he was to many different persons; his letters still give many proofs of his thoughtful kindness to his own and his wife's relations; he was always mindful of the poor, and in the most private, quiet way; and by his will he freed all his slaves.

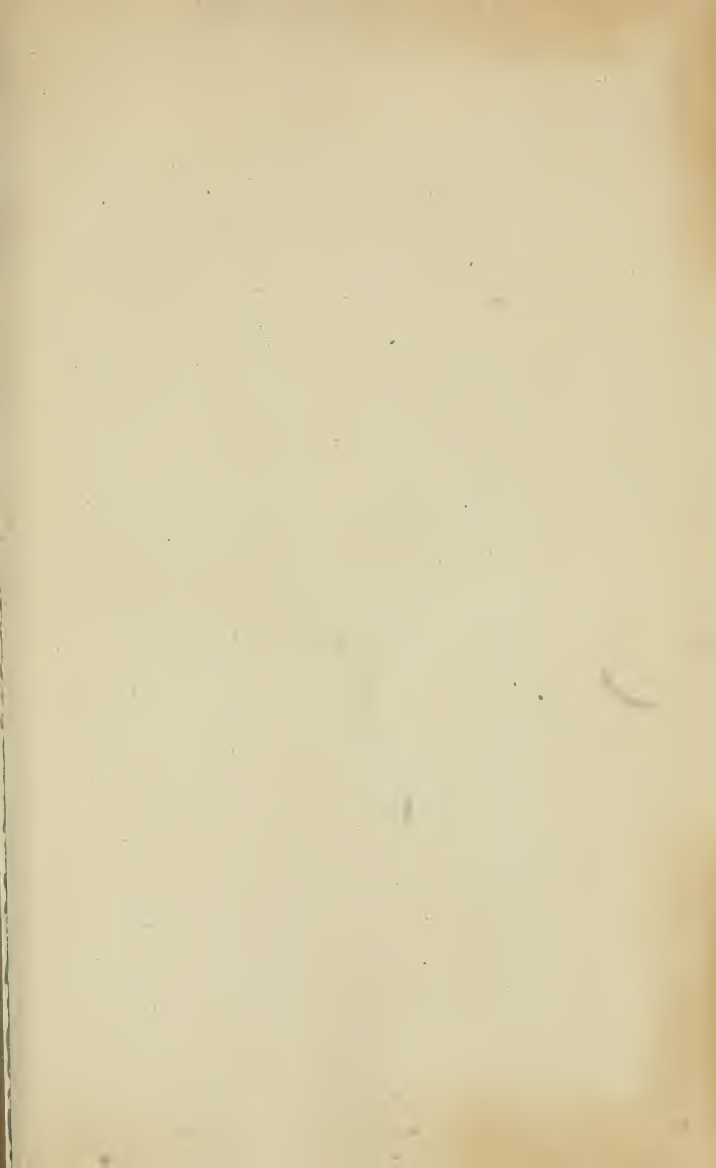
And if his letters to Mrs. Washington had been preserved, we might know much more of his feelings and of his home; as it is, we have enough to be sure that they were worthy of his public course, and of the love and reverence of every American.

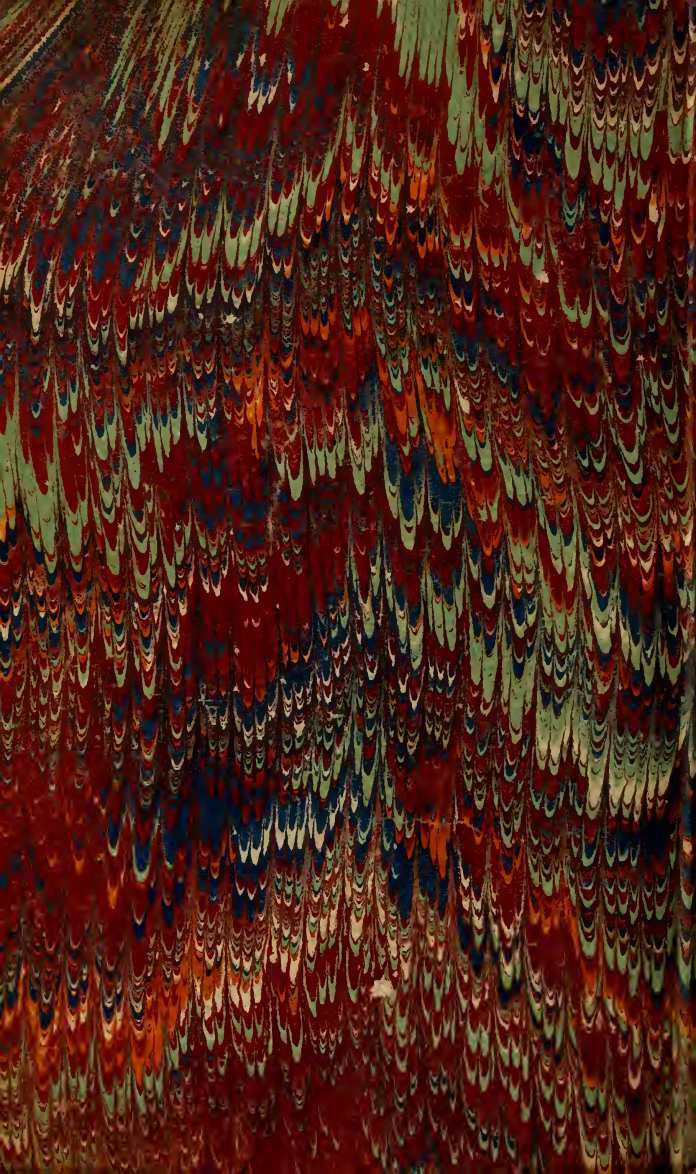
Cannot we make ourselves more worthy to be his countrymen? Cannot we learn his life *by heart*, and be ready, as he was, to serve our country? Probably we shall have only small things to do, instead of his great ones; but let us at least remember that Washington always did his best.

THE END.











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